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Livestock Mortality Management

For more information on dealing with animal mortalities, review the following resources:

- "Best Environmental Management Practices: Mortality Management," Purdue University Cooperative Extension, West Lafayette, IN. 2001 www.ces.purdue.edu/extmedia/ID/ID-302.pdf
- "Disposal Methods of Livestock Mortality," University of Nebraska-Lincoln Cooperative Extension, Lincoln, NE. G1421. www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/epublic/pages/publicationD.jsp?publicationID=193
- "Livestock Mortality Management," Alberta, Canada Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. 2002. [www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex6081](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex6081)

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Small Acreage Series - Livestock Mortality Management

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If you are an agricultural producer or small acreage owner involved in raising livestock as a business or as a hobby, one of the most difficult things you will be dealing with is the disposal of dead livestock. Through this information sheet, different methods of dealing with animal mortalities will be reviewed and detailed resources provided to help you determine if a specific practice is appropriate for your operation.

Note: Please check with your county health department for specific regulations regarding the disposal of livestock mortalities and how these will affect your operation. Do this BEFORE you have a disposal issue so you have a plan in place for mortality management.

Animal deaths must be handled properly for at least three important reasons:

1. Health
Quick removal of dead animals can limit the spread of disease and prevent other animals from becoming sick.
2. Environmental Protection
Nutrients as well as harmful materials released as dead animals decay can drain or be carried into nearby water.
3. Appearance
Neighbors and visitors may find the sight of dead animals very disagreeable and may form a negative impression of your operation.

Acceptable ways of managing livestock deaths include:

1. Rendering
2. Animal Recovery Services
3. Composting
4. Sanitary landfills
5. Burial
6. Incineration

Rendering

The following are rendering companies making dead animal pickups in northern/northeastern Colorado. Their pickup areas are limited:

Weld County Bi-products
1138 N. 11th Avenue
Greeley, CO 80631
(970) 352-1788

- Will pick up mortalities as far south as 112th Avenue, west to the foothills, north to Wellington, and east to Prospect Valley.
- Cost estimates for pickup: \$100/horse, \$30/cow with good hide, \$30 & up/other small livestock. These costs will vary depending on distance and length of time animal has been dead.
- They do accept sheep and goats.
- Call the company directly with questions regarding current costs and pickup areas
- Company expects payment for animal pickup when they are on-site collecting the animal(s).

Fort Morgan Pet Foods Co.
13553 County Rd. 19
Fort Morgan, CO 80701-7506
(970) 867-5970

- Will pick up dead animals in an area outlined by Stoneham, Sedgwick, Haxtun, Yuma, Greeley and Roggen.
- Charges include \$22/fresh animal, \$32/decaying carcass, \$42/bad hide or predator damaged, \$10/calf, \$25/ goat, and pigs are \$15/animal if delivered to the company and \$35 minimum/animal up to 500 pounds.
- They DO NOT take sheep.
- They offer special pricing for daily pick ups (feedlots, etc.).
- Call the company with questions.

Animal Recovery Services

These companies pick up and dispose of animal carcasses for a fee. Contact your veterinarian for other options.

CCE Recovery Services
1616 E. 78th Ave., Lot 67
Denver, CO 80229
(303) 288-0906
(303) 760-5594 (pager)

- The company's pick up area extends north to Fort Collins, south past Castle Rock and east to Deer Trail. They will pick up animals in the foothills area as well.
- They will collect any deceased animal.
- Fee for pick up ranges from \$185 - \$275, based on mileage.
- Collection fee due at time of pickup.
- Call the company to schedule collection and determine fee.

Colorado Animal Recovery Services, Inc.
P.O. Box 156
Conifer, CO 80433
(303) 916-6650

- The firm's collection area is primarily western Jefferson County. Will pick up animals in other areas if schedule permits.

Small Acreage Series - Livestock Mortality Management

- Collection fees are \$300 - \$350 per cow or horse. The cost for sheep, goats and pigs is slightly less.
- Payment due at time of pickup.
- Call company with questions or to schedule collection.

Greener Pastures Transport
P.O. Box 712
LaPorte, CO 80535
(970) 690-4383
(970) 224-1761 (cellular)

- Will pickup dead stock throughout Colorado if requested.
- Will collect any size animal.
- Rates for pickup vary from approximately \$50 – 500 depending on the distance traveled and the difficulty in getting to the animal to be collected.
- Will transport the animal to the animal owner's burial site.
- Company provides unique services included in the fee:
 - Company owner covers the animal's head with a cloth.
 - Says a prayer prior to loading the animal.
 - Will dispose of animal or will transport to Precious Memories, Fort Collins, for cremation or burial (arrangements with Precious Memories must be made by the animal's owner).
 - Will arrange for different memorial items (hoof print plaque, etc.).
- Check with the company for details.
- Contact the company with questions or to schedule a pickup.

Livestock Transportation Service
13427 W. Exposition Dr.
Lakewood, CO 80512
(303) 284-2203

- Area of collection includes Fort Collins to the north, south to Colorado Springs, and west to Bailey and Conifer.
- Will pick up horses, cattle, sheep, pigs and goats.
- Sample fees:
 - Per animal collected in Lakewood, Arvada, or Wheatridge - \$150
 - Per animal collected in/around Brighton or Ft. Lupton - \$175
- Contact the company with questions or to schedule a collection.

Composting

Composting can recycle livestock mortalities into nutrients useable in crop production and soil enhancement. Specific guidelines are given in the following online publications so you can look at all aspects of composting to determine if it is a viable solution for managing livestock deaths on your property. Please check with your county health department regarding regulations that might modify or limit this practice in your area.

“Composting Dead Livestock: A New Solution to an Old Problem,” Iowa State University of Science and Technology Cooperative Extension, Ames, IA. 1999.
www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/SA8.pdf

“Composting Dead Sheep,” Maryland Cooperative Extension, College Park, MD.
www.sheepandgoat.com/articles/compostsheep.html

“Disposing of Dead Goats,” Maryland Cooperative Extension, College Park, MD. 1998.
www.sheepandgoat.com/articles/compost.html

“The Bare Bones of Carcass Composting”, Environmental Livestock Program, Manitoba Conservation, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. 2004.
www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/livestock/composting/index.html

Sanitary Landfills

Some Colorado landfills allow disposal of dead animals, some do not. Be sure to contact landfills in your area before transporting mortalities to determine if they are accepting dead animals, the cost per unit for disposal and any other restrictions (covered cargo requirements, etc.). The following Front Range landfills were accepting dead animals when this paper was compiled:

Buffalo Ridge Landfill, 11655 WCR 59, Keenesburg, CO – (303) 732-0218
Call company for current fees for livestock mortality disposal.
If you have Special Waste (multiple dead animals or other species), call (720) 977-2113 for costs and procedures.
Landfill hours: Mon. – Fri. – 7 a.m. – 4 p.m. Sat. – 8 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Denver Arapahoe Disposal Site, 3500 Gun Club Rd., Aurora, CO – (720) 876-2620
Costs for animal disposal - \$85/load (one large animal – horse or cow/two sheep equal one large animal)
Call the company directly with questions regarding costs, etc.
Landfill hours: Mon.- Thurs. – open 24 hours Close on Fri. at 8 p.m. Sat.– 7 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Foothills Landfill, 8900 Hwy. 93, Golden, CO – (303) 279-2344
Costs for animal disposal - \$9/cubic yd. (horse/cow – 2 cu. yds., sheep/pig – 1 cu. yd.), \$3 environmental fee, 2% - 6% fuel recovery fee (changes monthly), and a \$60 burial charge
Call the company directly with questions on fees, etc.
Landfill hours: Mon. – Fri. – 6 p.m. – 5 p.m. Sat. – 7 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Larimer County Landfill, 5887 S. Taft Hill Rd., Ft. Collins, CO – (970) 498-5770
Costs to dispose of animals - \$5.60/each 50 lbs. of carcass weight plus an \$.11 Colorado State Surcharge per truck.
All loads must be covered and securely tie animal(s) to vehicle or you will be charged DOUBLE for an unsecured load (regulation strictly enforced).
Landfill hours: Mon.- Sat. – 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Sun. (Apr.-Oct.) – 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Please go to: www.co.larimer.co.us/solidwaste/landfill.htm to review specific restrictions regarding disposal of animals.

North Weld Sanitary Landfill, 40000 WCR 25, Ault, CO – (970) 686-2800
Cost to dispose of animal mortality is \$18/animal.
Call the company with questions on costs or business hours.
Landfill hours: Mon. – Fri. – 6 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Sat. – 8 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Tower Landfill, 8480 Tower Rd., Commerce City, CO – (303) 371-5115 ext. 100
Cost to dispose of animal mortalities is \$10.50/cubic yard of waste and there is a 5 cubic yard minimum charge plus a \$50 burial charge
Call the company with questions.
Landfill hours: Operates 24 hrs. a day EXCEPT closes Sat. at 3 p.m. and opens Mon. at 6 a.m.

The following landfills were NOT accepting dead animals:

- Denver Regional Landfill, Erie, CO
- Front Range Landfill, Erie, CO

These landfills responded to our inquiries about accepting animal mortalities. There may be other landfills in your area. Check with them about their policies.

Burial

This is probably the most common method of disposal. Adams and Weld Counties are regulated under Colorado Statute 25-1-612. Specific requirements include:

- Burial must be at least 150 feet down gradient from a well, standing water or free flowing water.
- Bury all parts of the animal with a minimum of 24” of soil cover.
- Do not bury in a low-lying area, gully, ditch at the base of a hill, or in an area prone to flooding.
- The bottom of the burial pit must not be closer than five feet to the groundwater table.

Please check with your county's Department of Health and Environment for specific county regulations.

Incineration

This method is biologically the safest. However, it is slow, requires fuel and expensive equipment and can stir up complaints about air pollution and odors, even when done properly. This method would also require permitting from state and/or county health departments.

References

“Best Environmental Management Practices: Mortality Management,” Purdue University Cooperative Extension, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN. ID-302, E-2827.

“Disposal Methods of Livestock Mortality,” University of Nebraska-Lincoln Cooperative Extension, Lincoln, NE. G1421. 2001.