



Quality Watch

By Gary Trimmer

Director of Member Services/Quality Control

BODA Composting Rules Approved

The rules governing composting of dead animals in Michigan are finally approved and filed with the Secretary of State, with an effective date of October 1, 2007. These rules are the product of a long and tedious process that began in 2005 with legislative changes made to the Bodies of Dead Animal (BODA) act in Michigan.

The changes were made to allow composting of dead animals on bare ground without a structure. The changes to the BODA act in 2005 were made after research led by Dr. Dale Rozeboom and Jerrod Sanders at Michigan State University. They determined a low level of environmental risk associated with composting dead animals on bare ground when certain procedures are followed. Once the research project was completed, a stakeholders workgroup was formed by MDA to develop the rules governing composting of dead animals. The workgroup consisted of MSU, MDA, DEQ Water Quality and Air Quality, NRCS, Sierra Club, Farm Bureau, and MMPA. After nearly two years of deliberation and compromise, the workgroup finalized the recommended rules and submitted the proposed rules for adoption. The process culminated with the final adoption of the composting rules on September 26, 2007.

The newly adopted rules allow composting of dead animals on

bare ground without an overhead structure or walls providing strict composting procedures are followed. Only farms with 20,000 pounds or less of annual animal mortality will be allowed to compost on bare ground. Farms that exceed the 20,000 pounds of annual animal mortality must compost on an impervious surface and must collect all effluent and runoff.

For an animal production operation with less than 20,000 pounds of mortality annually, composting may be done without a structure or vessel providing the following conditions are met:

(a) A new composting site shall be selected for use annually. The following shall apply:

(i) Use of the current year's site may continue until the compost is finished, but not more than two years from the time of the first dead animal addition, at which time the finished compost must be disposed of in accordance with Rule 5(10).

(ii) No new tissue shall be added to a site after one year from the first dead animal addition.

(iii) A new site may be immediately adjacent to a previous site.

(iv) A previous site shall not be reused within a 10-year period of time.

(b) A new site shall be on land used in crop rotation.

(c) A new site shall not be directly above subsurfacing drains or tile.

Active composting shall maintain all of the following:

(a) Carbon-to-nitrogen ratio minimum of 15:1.

(b) Moisture content, range of 40 percent to 60 percent.

(c) At least one reading of a temperature greater than 130 degrees Fahrenheit after the initiation of a batch with the temperature measured at a depth of one foot into the compost once weekly. A temperature reading shall be conducted twice per week for a rotating drum, continuous flow, in-vessel system.

(i) The following conditions shall be met for active composting:

(a) Composting temperature may remain in a range of 100 to 150 degrees Fahrenheit for several weeks.

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(b) Properly timed aeration and (or) moisture alterations.

(ii) Each batch of animal tissue compost must undergo a minimum of three heat cycles of active composting before final utilization.

(iii) A static compost pile may be aerated passively, by periodic agitation, mixing or turning, or by using forced aeration.

The finished compost may be spread on cropland. In addition, composting records shall be kept for five years containing the following information:

(a) The start date of each compost batch.

(b) The approximate weight, maturity, and species of dead animals or afterbirth added each time an addition is made and the dates the tissue is added to new compost batches.

(c) The temperature of each batch measured weekly, shall be taken at a minimum of one foot deep into the compost.

(d) The date compost is mechanically aerated shall be recorded.

(e) The final disposition of finished compost, including the method, destination, date, and volume for the batch.

When locating your composting site, keep in mind isolation distances of 200 feet from wells and from property setbacks. See "New Well in Your Plans?" article on page 18 to learn more.

Composting provides producers with an environmental friendly, low-cost option for handling animal mortality. Proper handling of animal mortality is one require-

ment toward obtaining MAEAP verification. The new rules will soon be incorporated into the MAEAP verification process.

A copy of the rules may be obtained from MDA or by contacting me at the Novi office. MSU Extension plans to schedule educational training sessions throughout

the state this winter to thoroughly review the composting rules with interested producers. We will provide more information as details are finalized.



Producers scoring 95 percent or more on Grade A Surveys and Federal Check Ratings

Organic Valley

September 2007

Perry N. Lehman*
Raymond D Yoder
Marlin R Miller
Dennis M Yoder

MMPA Allendale North

September 2007

Mazel Houghton*
Higgins Livestock Inc. *
Jerome Rybicki
Howe Farms Inc.
John Allison
Lundberg Bros Inc.
Dale Rowland
Klamer Farms Inc.
Beuschel Fruit & Dairy Farm LLC
Cressbrook Farms
Heidi Lombard
Glen, Casey & Andrew Sparks

MMPA Huron County

September 2007

John Kappen*
Darrin Lutz Farms Inc. *
Joseph & Valerie Kubacki

Daniel Van Erp
Richard Schroeder
Donald Wilson
Nael Laeder
Robert & William Gehring
Highland Dairy LLC

MMPA Simon

September 2007

Hufnagel Farm LLC

*scored 100 percent