

# Mortality Composting Facility

## Frequently Asked Questions



### Q: What is the Purpose?

**A:** Producers can meet waste management and natural resource goals by utilizing this practice to turn waste into an environmentally and economically valuable resource.

Composting is the controlled aerobic biological decomposition of organic matter into a stable, product called compost. It is similar to natural decomposition except that it is enhanced and accelerated by mixing organic waste with other ingredients to optimize microbial growth.

### Q: What are the Benefits?

**A:** A properly managed mortality composting system is low cost, environmentally sound, bio-secure, and virtually odor free.

**Economical:** Composting has low to moderate start-up costs and minimal operating costs. Availability and cost of a composting medium (sawdust, wood chips, straw, etc.) are the only significant ongoing operating requirement.

**Environmentally Beneficial:** A properly functioning compost pile gives off little odor and does not harm or affect groundwater. Composting turns a waste into a beneficial fertilizer and soil amendment, resulting in on-farm nutrient recycling. Nuisances such as flies, vermin, and scavenging animals are also prevented.

**Safe:** Composting allows immediate year-round disposal of carcasses so that disease is not spread. There is no entry of off-farm vehicles that can bring disease onto the farm from other operations, and the high temperatures in the compost pile kill pathogens.

### Q: NRCS Construction Standards

**A:** Ohio NRCS plans, cites, and contracts these facilities per Conservation Practice Standard 316 - Animal Mortality Facility, which can be found in the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide. Standards include:

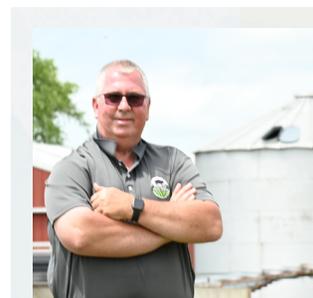


#### Impervious Weight-Bearing Concrete Pad:

Supports and allows heavy equipment to maneuver; prevents seepage of nutrients and bacteria into groundwater; and provides a durable, all-weather surface to allow the process to continue year-round.

**Roof:** Most piles must be covered with a roof or other water-repelling materials to prevent excessive moisture on composting materials

**Building Materials:** Composting building must be built of rot-resistant material strong enough to withstand the force exerted by equipment: preservative pressure-treated lumber, concrete, hot-dipped galvanized and/or stainless steel nails and fasteners.



**Duane Stateler,**  
 Producer, Blanchard  
 River Demonstration  
 Farms Network

“Building the new mortality composting facility has been a great experience. We worked with NRCS to create a durable structure that’s eye-appealing, easy to use and makes on-site operations more efficient.”

#### Next Steps

1. Contact your local NRCS office for financial and technical assistance.
2. Check out the OSU Extension Ohio Mortality Composting Certification Workshop.

[Ohio]

[Natural Resources Conservation Service](#)  
[nrcs.usda.gov/](https://nrcs.usda.gov/)



**Watch the Video: Ohio NRCS YouTube**