



Disposal in Landfills of Animal Carcasses Generated from Non-Disease Related Events

Office of Land Quality

(317) 232-4473 • (800) 451-6027

www.idem.IN.gov

100 N. Senate Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46204

Introduction

Landfill disposal of animal carcasses and related wastes generated from a non-disease event is an acceptable disposal option if special handling and landfill operational procedures are followed. Non-disease related events might include natural disasters, lack of capacity at processing or rendering facilities to accept the animals, and climate control failures at confined feeding operations. Municipal solid waste land disposal facilities (landfills), permitted under 329 Indiana Administrative Code (IAC) 10, are properly sited and have the necessary environmental controls to manage animal carcasses in a manner that is protective of human and animal health and the environment. Further, landfills can safely manage the typical related wastes that result from a non-disease related mortality event in a timely and environmentally protective manner. This document provides an overview of expected landfill activities in response to a non-disease event resulting in mass mortality of livestock, poultry, or both.

Landfill Operational Practices When Accepting Animal Carcasses

The landfill operational practices necessary to ensure management and disposal of animal carcasses and related wastes in a manner protective of human health and the environment are already included in the standard permit requirements of these facilities. However, one purpose of this Fact Sheet is to provide additional, context-specific details regarding the waste acceptance and disposal procedures needed to manage the wastes properly and comply with those permit requirements.

Animal carcasses, especially swine and cattle, generate large volumes of liquids after disposal, so they need to be placed within landfill cells with appropriate leachate collection systems to properly manage the additional liquids. In addition, locations within the landfill where the carcasses have been disposed may have greater differential settlement over time, so knowing the locations of the carcasses helps the landfill and IDEM's compliance inspectors to better understand how they may or may not contribute to any compliance issues. Animal carcasses may be disposed of at the active face of the landfill or in trenches excavated in inactive portions of the landfill. In all cases, the animal carcasses will be disposed of on the day they are received at the landfill and covered with other waste or daily cover materials. Efforts will be made not to disrupt routine waste acceptance at the landfill when animal carcasses are being received. The landfill will notify and consult with IDEM on any issues that arise with disposal of animal carcasses that may pose an environmental threat.

Authorities, Roles, and Responsibilities

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the Indiana Board of Animal Health (BOAH) are the lead agencies at the federal and state levels, respectively, in responding to mass animal mortalities. In response to some prior mass mortality events, the USDA-APHIS has supported proper animal carcass management through payment of some or all of the disposal-related costs incurred by the producer. Ultimately, the owner of the animal(s) is responsible for: the proper disposal of animal carcasses and related wastes; following any applicable Federal, State, and Local laws; and securing any necessary permits, including approvals required by the landfill in advance of their acceptance of the wastes.

Landfills are responsible for properly managing the animal carcasses and related wastes in compliance with their permits.

IDEM supports BOAH in the disposal decision-making process by evaluating the potential environmental impacts of disposal options and providing technical advice on how and where the animal carcasses and related wastes can be disposed of in an environmentally protective manner.

For More Information

Please direct any questions regarding disposal of animal carcasses to the Solid Waste Permits Section, Office of Land Quality, at (317) 232-4473.