

## FARM PRACTICES

## MORTALITY DISPOSAL

### Description

Mortalities occur on livestock and poultry operations. The numbers of mortalities and the amount of material to dispose of is usually small. However, in the case of a severe disease outbreak or equipment failure, the numbers and amount can be substantial.

### Nuisance Concerns

The three main disturbances mentioned in the *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act* are odour, noise and dust. Of particular concern to mortality disposal practices is odour.

#### Odour

Farmers engage in a variety of activities that produce odours. Some mortality disposal practices generate odour. Odour is the human response to chemicals in the air. How people perceive the odour (nuisance or not) will depend on the frequency, intensity, duration and offensiveness of the odour, how well they smell and personal experiences associated with the odour.

See Nuisance Reference: [Odour](#)

### Activities and Operations

#### Mortality Removal

It is important to remove mortalities from the premises as soon as possible to protect the health of other livestock and poultry in the same area and prevent rodent and insect problems.

#### Mortality Disposal

If the environmental temperature is above freezing, mortalities should be disposed of before decomposition sets in. If temperatures are below freezing, there is not the same urgency.

In areas served by disposal companies, farm pick up service is available and is the most efficient method of disposal.

In areas not serviced by disposal companies, mortalities can be buried. Buried mortalities must not contaminate water supplies and must be buried deep enough that predators cannot dig them up. If the ground is frozen and burial is not possible, mortalities may be stored until such time as the frost comes out of the ground. In such cases, mortalities must be stored so that other livestock, poultry and predators cannot get at them.

In remoter areas of British Columbia such as much of the cattle industry's range lands it is acceptable to dispose of dead livestock by feeding to predators.

See Farm Practice: [Pest Management](#)

### **Mortality Processing**

Processing mortalities by physical, chemical or biological treatment for resource recovery is preferable to burial when it can be done within the suggested guidelines.

See Farm Practice: [Composting](#)

## **Legislation**

Information on federal and provincial legislation can be found in Appendices B and C. Acts, regulations and bylaws that regulate or may affect mortality disposal include, but are not limited to, the following:

### **Provincial**

*Health Act* – regulates farm practices that may result in a health hazard

*Waste Management Act* – protects environment (soil, water & air) from pollution

*Agricultural Waste Control Regulation* – allows a farmer to operate without a waste permit when disposing mortalities according to the *Code of Agricultural Practice for Waste Management*

*Wildlife Act* – does not allow the use of carcasses as wildlife bait with out permission

## **Publications**

Publications that provide information on the disposal of mortalities include, but are not limited to, the following (refer to Appendix D for details):

*B.C. Agricultural Composting Handbook*

*British Columbia Environmental Farm Plan Reference Guide*