

# Natural Rendering: Composting Livestock Mortality

## Potential Environmental and Biosecurity Risk of Dead Animal Disposal



Cornell Farm Services compost site

### Why Farms Should Compost Mortality and Residuals

- ◆ Pathogen kill occurs in thermophilic composts
- ◆ Can be done any time of the year, even when the ground is frozen
- ◆ Can be done with equipment available on most farms
- ◆ Relatively odor free
- ◆ All sizes of animals can be composted
- ◆ Placental membranes and other tissue can be composted
- ◆ Relatively low labor and management needed
- ◆ Low cost



### Caution

Animals showing signs of a neurological disease must be reported to authorities and disposed of in the manner they recommend. It is not clear whether prions, the agent that causes Bovine Spongiform Encephalitis (Mad Cow Disease), would be destroyed in the composting process. Animals that show signs of a neurological disease should not be composted. Animals under quarantine that die and those with anthrax should not be composted.



### Lowest Risk

Picked up by **rendering company** within 48 hours after death or **properly composted** on the farm.



**Buried 6-ft deep** in appropriate soils and buried more than 200 feet from a water body, watercourse, well or spring.



**Partially buried** less than 6-ft deep or buried closer than 200 feet from a water body, watercourse, well or spring.



Carcass is left outside for **scavengers or to decay**. Because of the cost of disposal, it will be tempting to dispose of carcasses by leaving them exposed in a woodlot to be scavenged. This is very risky from an environmental standpoint and that of disease transmission on your farm.



### Highest Risk



Source - "Natural Rendering: Composting Livestock Mortality and Butcher Waste" fact sheet