

**Water Quality Enhancement Activity – WQL22 - On farm composting of farm organic waste**



**Enhancement Description**

This enhancement consists of the on farm composting of organic waste produced from agricultural operations. Composted products must be reused on the farm. This includes all animal manures, livestock mortality, vegetable culls removed from the field and waste from on farm processing of agricultural products. It does not include any household waste, any hazardous waste products or bio-hazard waste products. Yard waste such as grass clippings, leaves can be included but are not required to be included.

**Land Use Applicability**

Cropland and pastureland.

**Benefits**

Composting reduces the volume of waste, kills pathogens, reduces odors and improves the cycling of nutrients. The reuse of the compost products on the farm where they were produced improves soil quality and reduces the need to bring additional nutrients on to the farm.

**Criteria**

All waste products produced on the farm must be composted. This includes:

- a. Animal manures from confined areas
- b. Livestock mortality (where state or local laws allow)
- c. Vegetable culls
- d. Waste from on farm processing of agricultural products

It does not include:

- a. Household waste
- b. Hazardous waste products
- c. Bio-hazard waste products
- d. Crop residue

Follow a composting plan that includes:

1. Balancing Carbon/Nitrogen ratio based on materials being composted
2. Management of composting temperatures
3. Mixing and compost time requirements based on materials being composted

Compost site and environmental considerations

1. Compost area to be sized according to organic material being generated
2. Runoff must be diverted from compost pad



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3. Runoff from compost pad must be directed through a grass buffer strip or other means to prevent water quality impairment

Conduct composting operations in accordance with NRCS Conservation Practice Standards *Composting Facility, 317* and *Animal Mortality Facility, 316* as appropriate. Use all compost produced on the farm as a soil amendment on the farm. Apply the compost according to a nutrient management plan that considers the crop needs, timing and rate of application.

#### **Documentation Requirements**

1. An inventory of waste products produced on the farm.
2. An estimate of the annual quantities of compost to be produced.
3. A location map showing the location of the composting facility(s).
4. A nutrient management plan for the land application of the compost.
5. Composting Plan

## ALABAMA SUPPLEMENT TO ENHANCEMENT WQL22 ON FARM COMPOSTING OF FARM ORGANIC WASTE

This enhancement reduces the volume of waste, kills pathogens, reduces odors, and the need to bring additional nutrients on the farm while improving nutrient cycling and soil quality. The producer must compost all waste products produced on the farm including animal manures from confined areas, livestock mortality (where laws allow), vegetable culls, and on farm processing waste. The composted material must be land applied to cropland or pastureland on the farm. A composting plan that includes a balancing of carbon/nitrogen ratio based on material being composted, management of composting temperatures, and timely mixing of the compost are required. The composting site must be sized according to organic material being generated with runoff being diverted from composting pad through a grass buffer strip or other means to prevent water quality impairment. Refer to the national enhancement, NRCS Practice Standards, Composting Facility, (317) and Animal Mortality Facility (316) for more information.

### Documentation Requirements:

1. Written inventory of waste products produced with estimated quantities of compost to be produced.
2. A composting plan and nutrient management plan for the land application of the compost. A nutrient management plan contains the following for each application site: a) aerial photographs (with buffers); b) soils map; c) crop rotation; d) soil test (no older than 3 years); e) yield goals; f) Alabama Phosphorus Index; g) nutrient budget; h) planned rates, methods, and timing; and i) guidance for implementation/operation and maintenance/record keeping.
3. A map showing the location of the composting facility.

### References:

**Commonly Asked Questions About Composting: Alabama Cooperative Extension System**  
<http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-0794/>

**Making and Using Compost for Organic Farming: *eOrganic* article**  
<http://www.extension.org/article/18567>

**NRCS Practice Standards, Composting Facility, (317)**  
<http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/AL/tg317.pdf>

**NRCS Practice Standards, Animal Mortality Facility (316)**  
<http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/AL/tg316.pdf>

ALABAMA SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION FOR THIS ENHANCEMENT

*WQL22 On Farm Composting of Farm Organic Waste*

**Documentation Form**

|  |  |                |  |
|--|--|----------------|--|
| <b>Producer Name:</b>  |  | <b>Date:</b>   |  |
|  |  | <b>County:</b> |  |
| <b>Inventory of waste produced on the farm</b>   |  |                |  |
| <b>Estimate annual quantities of compost</b>   |  |                |  |
| <b>Producer has self certified the application of manure was within the 590 standard *</b> |  |                |  |

Attach a map of the location of the composting facility, composting plan and nutrient management plan for land application.

\* Producer must self certify that no manure application was made on any buffered portion of the field, manure application were not made within 3 days of a storm event and all other requirements for manure application contained within the 590 standard were satisfied.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_