

# Conservation Assistance for Cleaner Water in Connecticut

## Bedded Pack Barns and Manure Storage

*Helping People Help the Land*

### ***What is a Bedded Pack Barn?***

Bedded Pack Barns can be a quick and simple way to house a variety of livestock by continuously adding new bedding to the living area. Bedded Pack Barns provide livestock with a large bedded pen for resting and walking rather than individual stalls and concrete alleyways.

### ***Why should I consider a Bedded Pack Barn?***

Bedded Pack Barns can be more cost effective to build than other housing systems.

On farms where space is limited, Bedded Pack Barns may reduce the area needed to house livestock and store manure.

On farms where there is limited land to spread manure, compost made from the bedded pack may be marketed to landscapers, gardeners, or field crop producers.

### ***How does a Bedded Pack Barn Works?***

Typically a bedded pack area of about 75 square feet is needed for every 1,000 pounds of livestock. This area does not include the space for feeding or watering areas. Walls four to six feet in height are needed to accommodate manure and fresh bedding as it builds into a pack over an established period of time, typically six months. The feed and watering area is accessed by ramping the bed to the ground level. Manure from the feeding area should be stored in another facility.

In some cases portable feeders and water troughs can be used within the bedded pack area. This type of system requires a larger bedded pack area, but may reduce the need for feeding areas and additional manure storage.

### ***Is a Bedded Pack Barn right for my farm?***

- Do you have a reliable, adequate, and affordable source of bedding?
- Would a bedded pack system store most of the manure produced at the farm?
- Do you have sufficient grazing land so livestock may only need housing during inclement weather?
- Do you have a potential market to sell composted manure?

***If you answered yes to most of these questions, a Bedded Pack Barn may work for you!***



***Field stacked manure can be a source of odor, flies, and water pollution.***



***In some settings, waste storage facilities can occupy a significant part of the available land.***



***Large liquid manure storage facilities can occupy valuable space, collect significant volumes of rain water, have odor problems, and can overflow.***



***Bedded Pack Barns combine housing and waste storage on the same surface area.***

### ***Advantages of Bedded Pack Barns:***

- Comfortable environment reduces lameness and provides comfortable rest areas.
- By combining manure storage with housing, there is less capital investment for buildings and waste storage facilities.
- Composted pack manure makes an excellent fertilizer. It can also be sold.
- Bedded Pack Barns tend to have less odor problems than other manure storage systems.
- Solid manure is easier to handle and transport than liquid manure.

### ***Disadvantages of Deep Bedded Pack Barns:***

- Requires a large amount of bedding.
- Some composting may take place in the bedded pack, but it will not be a fully composted product. A separate composting facility may be needed to produce easy to handle, marketable compost.
- To keep the bedded pack area cleaner, a separate watering and feeding area may be needed. The manure from this area would be collected in a separate waste storage facility.
- Ventilation and exclusion of rain must be planned to keep the bedded pack dry and livestock comfortable.
- Management requires regular attention. Soiled areas need to be bedded regularly with clean dry bedding.
- On dairy farms, liquid waste storage would still be needed for milk room waste water and runoff from silage piles.



### **Technical and Financial Assistance is Available**

Your local NRCS office has experienced conservationists who can assist you in planning and implementing a Bedded Pack Barn as a component of a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan. They can also help you develop a Conservation Plan to solve other problems you have identified on your farm. Financial assistance may also be available. For more information, contact your local NRCS office:

- Fairfield and New Haven Counties - (203) 287-8038
- Hartford and Tolland Counties - (860) 688-7725
- Litchfield County - (860) 626-8258
- Middlesex and New London Counties - (860) 887-3604
- Windham County - (860) 779-0557

Visit our website at [www.ct.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ct.nrcs.usda.gov)