



Small Scale Solutions for your Farm

Manure Storage



Do You Have Problems with:

- Unsightly and smelly, messy manure
- Manure that encourages flies and that is unhealthy for farm animals
- Manure washing into streams, ponds, or lakes where it pollutes the water and can harm fish
- Manure seeping into drinking water and making people sick
- Neighbors complaining about odors from mismanaged manure



Manure can be a problem if not managed properly

Purposes and Benefits of Manure Storage

- Storage makes it easier to get manure in the right place at the right time to improve the quality of your soil and the health of your crops
- With good storage and handling, manure can reduce your fertilizer bill
- Livestock will be cleaner and healthier

Managing Manure

Manure that is properly stored can be used for fertilizer. Here are some things you can do:

- Give your animals the necessary feed for their health and growth, but do not overfeed them.
- The dryer you keep the manure, the less storage you will need and the less you will have to transport to the field.
- Animals can spread their own manure if enough land is available.





- Keep livestock in portable pens that you move around the field.
- Moving the location where you feed and water your animals can help prevent manure accumulation and the creation of bare areas.
- If it is necessary to confine livestock, consider keeping them under a roof so manure is not washed away by rain.
- Straw and hay can create a bedded pack for the animals to stand and lie on.

Storing Manure

The more animals you keep the more likely it will be necessary to construct a special manure storage facility.

- The storage must be able to keep the manure from washing away and its nutrients from leaking into the groundwater.
- It should also keep odors to a minimum.
- In most cases, there are laws and regulations governing storage facilities.

Common types of storage include:

- Earthen pit
- Concrete pit
- Concrete or steel tank
- Roofed building
- Covered dry manure stack



Use of your manure sources for nutrients on your crops will have a positive benefit on your farm economy.



Properly managed manure can be a great nutrient source





Spreading Manure

- The more often manure is spread, the less need there is for storage.
- There are often periods of good weather and soil conditions during cold wet seasons when manure can be spread.
- It may be possible to shovel manure on to truck crops during the growing season
- Consider spreading manure on grasslands and woodlands when it is not possible to spread it on cropland.
- If the manure volume is small and the spreading is frequent, you may be able to store your manure directly in a manure spreader.



Cows on pasture spread their own manure

Open Lots

- All the water that runs off a bare lot with manure on it is polluted.
- When animals are kept on bare lots, keep the lots away from streams, ponds, lakes, and wells.
- Keep the lots small.
- Divert clean water.
- Water from roofs and surrounding areas should be captured and sent away from the animal lot.
- Keep the lots clean by scraping regularly.
- Paved open lots makes it easier to remove manure.



...as do other livestock...

Associated Costs

Storing manure can be expensive, but with thoughtful planning and careful management there are ways to keep the cost low.

- Dry manure is easier and cheaper to store and handle.
- Livestock on pastures spread their own manure.
- Manure storage size needs to be right for your livestock and management.



The nutrient content on the manure varies depending on the species.





Technical and Financial Help Is Available

Whether you measure your farm in terms of feet or acres, your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office has experienced conservationists that can help you develop a Conservation Plan to conserve, maintain, and restore the natural resources on your land and improve the long-term health of your operation.

There is no charge for our assistance. Simply contact your local office to set up an appointment. You may also be eligible to receive financial assistance. Your NRCS office will explain any programs that are available so you can make the best decision for your operation. All NRCS programs and services are voluntary.

For More Information

Visit the [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) or visit farmers.gov/service-locator to find your local NRCS office. You can also check with your local USDA Service Center, then make an appointment to determine next steps for your conservation goals.

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NRCS conservationist assisting small scale farmer with developing a customized conservation plan.

