CARCASS DISPOSAL
BIOSECURITY TIP SHEET

Farms and ranches lose animals due to disease. Dead animals should be disposed of promptly to prevent exposure to live animals. Carcass disposal options may include burial, burning, composting, landfill, or rendering. Local and state rules on carcass disposal must be followed.

Animals that have to be killed for humane reasons, sickness, or a contagious disease may need different disposal options. Sick or injured animals should be killed humanely and quickly if they are unlikely to recover. Some drugs used to kill animals could contaminate the environment or poison scavenger animals. Plan a few disposal options to protect the health of your animals and wildlife.

KNOW THE OPTIONS
Contact the agency that oversees carcass disposal in your area. The method will depend on:

- Animal species
- Number of animals
- Environmental impacts – nearby water, air quality, soil use
- Site selection
- Disease(s) of concern

PLAN AHEAD
Have a plan for safe handling and disposal of carcasses. Train all personnel on the carcass management plan.

Carcass disposal is controlled by state and local laws. Work with your veterinarian on a plan that meets legal requirements and works best for your operation. Include these items in your plan:

- Where carcasses can be stored on-site depending on disposal options.
  - Short-term storage may include:
    - Covering them with a tarp
    - Moving them to an area away from other animals
    - Enclosures
    - Cold storage
  - Long-term storage may include composting or burial.
- Contact information for a rendering company or the landfill.
- Different options for seasons (frozen ground, flooding, etc.).
- Different options for situations (killed with a drug, necropsy and cannot be picked up, a large number of animals die at once, etc.).
- Map of your farm/ranch with the carcass disposal/storage area(s) marked.
- Methods available to prevent wildlife, rodents, pets, and other scavengers from contacting carcasses and spreading disease or becoming ill.
CARCASS HANDLING EQUIPMENT
Caution must be taken with vehicles and equipment used for handling dead animals to prevent disease spread.

- Equipment used to handle carcasses or compost should not be used to handle feed unless cleaned and disinfected in between uses.
- Carcass pick up should happen at the edge of your property line. Rendering trucks and other vehicles hauling dead animals often travel to many other sites. They can easily become contaminated with diseases. It is best to prevent these vehicles from entering your operation.
- If using your own vehicle or equipment to haul dead animals to a disposal site, clean and disinfect after use. This will help prevent cross-contamination to other areas of your farm/ranch.

ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST
Use the following checklist to determine areas where you are doing well and others that need improvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
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<tr>
<td>After answering, pick one or two “No” answers and make an improvement plan with the resources below.</td>
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<td>Do you know the approved options to dispose of carcasses in your area?</td>
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<td>Are rendering trucks and other vehicles hauling dead animals to a common disposal site prevented from entering your property?</td>
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<td>Are dead animals disposed of in a manner that prevents the attraction of wildlife, pets, rodents, and other scavengers?</td>
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MORE RESOURCES
For more information, please access the following resources:

- Carcass Disposal Overview. Center for Food Security and Public Health, Iowa State University.
- Mortality Management – Healthy Farms Healthy Agriculture. Healthy Farms Healthy Agriculture.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
Development of this material was made possible through grants provided to the Center for Food Security and Public Health at Iowa State University, College of Veterinary Medicine from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service through the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program (NADPRP) and National Institute of Food and Agriculture, under award number AWD-021794-00001 through the North Central Region SARE program under project number ENC19-176. USDA is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the USDA. Iowa State University is an equal opportunity provider. For the full non-discrimination statement or accommodation inquiries, go to extension.iastate.edu/diversity/ext.