

Livestock Carcass Disposal

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March 2004

Since the loss of Florin Tallow Company near Dixon in 2001, livestock carcass disposal has become an expensive and complicated problem for livestock producers in the area. Below are some options for disposing of livestock carcasses followed by information and guidelines provided by Marc Horney, former Livestock and Natural Resources Advisor in Glenn County.

Sacramento Rendering Company
11350 Kiefer Blvd.
Sacramento, CA
916-363-4821

Animal Type	On-Farm Pick Up		Drop Off At Sacramento Facility
	Davis/Woodland Area	Fairfield Area	
Horse	\$ 225	\$ 260	\$ 125
Cow	80	90	50
Sheep/Goat	170	190	140
Pig	145		50

Al Kuck Livestock
4770 Bodega Ave.
Petaluma, CA
707-762-7688

Provides on-farm pick up of livestock carcasses; does not service Yolo County.

Animal Type	On-Farm Pick Up	
	Vallejo Area	Vacaville Area
Horse	\$ 165	\$ 190
Cow	115	140
Sheep/Goat/Deer/Pig	125	150
Calf less than 500 lbs.	100	125
Newborn calf	77	102

Petaluma Livestock Auction Yard
84 Corona Road
Petaluma, CA
707-763-0893

Provides a drop-off facility for livestock carcasses, which are then shipped to a renderer in Turlock. Open 7 days a week, 8 am to 4 pm Sun. – Fri., 8 am – Noon on Saturday.

Animal Type	Drop Off At Petaluma
Horse	\$ 90
Cow	40
Sheep/Goat/Deer/Pig	50
Calf less than 500 lbs.	25

The following information was taken from an article in the Land and Livestock newsletter, written by Marc Horney, former Livestock & Natural Resources Advisor in Glenn County. You can view the entire article on the web at the following web address:
http://ucce.ucdavis.edu/counties/ceglenn/newsletterfiles/Land_and_Livestock_News956.PDF

The California Department of Food and Agriculture's Meat and Poultry Inspection Service (<http://www.cdffa.gov/ahfss/mpi/index/htm>) is responsible for commercial livestock carcass disposal (rendering) in the state as defined in section 18650-18677 of the California food and Agriculture Code (<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/cacodes/fac/18650-18677.html>). The Meat and Poultry Inspection Service views rendering or transfer to a rendering collection as the only legal means of disposal for livestock carcasses leaving the owner's property. Primarily, this is because it is the easiest way to control carcasses and, therefore, protect public and environmental health. The California Department of Food and Agriculture does not itself regulate carcass disposal for animals that have *not* died from contagious diseases when the carcasses are disposed of on-site (on owner's property)**. That generally falls to local government - usually the county department of environmental health, although any agency tasked with public health or air (in case of incineration) or water pollution could get involved.

At the present time, it appears that responsibility for determining approved procedures for carcass disposal, other than by rendering in the State of California, tends to travel downhill to county departments of public health. Most of these are too busy dealing with other genuine problems to invest staff time that would be required to devise policies specifically for this particular issue. The CDFA staff that I spoke with recently indicated that they would like to take action on this problem. They have requested any information that can be provided on the following questions:

- Why is rendering becoming difficult to use? Is the service not being provided or is it too expensive?
- What species of livestock are losing access to rendering services?
- What is the approximate volume of animals in the area that could potentially be affected?

This information will be used to help build a case that an immediate need is present so that staff and resources can be committed to developing some solutions as soon as possible.

In 1996, Dr. John Kirk (UC Extension Veterinarian) surveyed the on-farm carcass-disposal ordinances reported by Agriculture Commissioners in 32 of the 58 counties in California. Twenty of those counties had no ordinances regulating carcass disposal. Ordinances in the remaining 12 counties primarily addressed who was responsible, proper burial depth and water source protection. Misinformation and codes referencing outdated and ineffective practices were found in a number of ordinances. Below is a summary of his findings:

Summary of Suggested Rules or Guidelines For On-Farm Burial of Dairy Cows

This is a summary of suggested rules or guidelines for on-farm burial of dairy cows taken from those California counties that replied to the request to provide their current rules or guidelines. While it may be intrusive for those counties without rules or those counties whose rules are under revision, it is merely a summary and carries no authoritative weight.

Objectives

On-farm disposal of dead dairy cows in such a manner as not to become a nuisance on-site or to neighbors, to prevent spread of disease to other cattle and to protect the public health and safety.

Who is Responsible

Owner is responsible for burial in a timely and sanitary manner.

Timing After Death

Buried within a reasonable time period, i.e. 24-48 hours after death. Buried prior to creation of adverse public health or nuisance.

How Buried

Each animal should be buried in a separate pit, unless mass burial is found necessary in an emergency situation to protect public health or the health of other livestock or wildlife. State or Federal veterinarian should probably be responsible for declaring an emergency.

How Deep

Deep enough to cover the top of the carcass with 4-6 feet of compacted soil and earth, and in an area not likely to be disturbed in the near future.

Where

Far enough from standing or flowing or ground water to prevent contamination of these waters and in an area not likely to be disturbed in the near future.

Suggested set-backs:

- Property lines25 feet
- Streams, creeks, ponds, lakes(high water mark)100 feet
- Water wells, springs 100 feet
- Ground water (min. distance pit-water) 5 feet
- Major cuts or embankments 25 feet
- Dwelling units100 feet
- Other structures25 feet
- Roads, highways0.25 miles
- Parks0.25 miles

Location of Burial Site

On a minimum of 5-10 acres to allow for proper setback and other restrictions.

****In the special case of animals suspected of succumbing to contagious disease, CDFA *does* regulate on-site carcass disposal. This is how the California Food and Agriculture Code reads:**

- 9141. Any person that has the care or control of any animal that dies from any contagious disease shall immediately cremate or bury the animal.
- 9142. An animal which has died from any contagious disease shall not be transported, except to the nearest crematory. The transportation of the animal to the crematory shall be pursuant to such regulations as the director may adopt.
- 9143. An animal which has died from any contagious disease shall not be used for the food of any human being, domestic animal, or fowl.