



WNRCD

*Educational Series*



## Horse Manure Composting

Composting horse manure, even on small farms can prevent excessive nutrients in the form of stormwater runoff from entering surface or groundwater

*An average horse can produce 1.67ft<sup>3</sup> per day of waste material!*



Horse manure composting is best completed utilizing a multi-bin system for horses on 5 acres or less or by managing compost in long windrows for farms with greater than 5 acres.

When horse manure is not managed properly it can leach excessive nutrients and pathogens into surface water and groundwater supplies.

### *Site Selection*

It is necessary and practical to store manure close to the barn. Convenience should be balanced with an effort to avoid placement in sensitive areas. For proper placement, it is important to understand the soil characteristics on the site and how water (including snowmelt) move. Bins should be placed to avoid wet areas or drainage areas.

## *Managing Horse Manure*

It is important to plan for the amount of storage that you will need over time. An average horse can produce 1.67ft<sup>3</sup> per day of waste material. As manure is stored over time, it will reduce in size, but it is better to have more space rather than not enough. A horse owner with three horses, storing manure and bedding for six months will need nearly 1,000 cubic feet of storage area. Three 8'x8'x6' compost bins should be sufficient.

### *Properly Managing Compost*

- Keep compost moist but not soaking wet
- Turn the compost frequently to oxygenate the pile

### *Importance of Composting Horse Manure*

Benefits from composting Horse manure include:

- Good for horse health by reducing flies and killing parasites and pathogens
- Can simplify manure management by reducing manure volume by 40-60%
- Will kill weed seeds and when applied, can enrich your pastures and improve soil health
- Can protect water quality by preventing nutrient pollution from entering waterways



For design plans, and further information on composting horse manure, please visit the WNRCD website at: [www.winooskinrcd.org](http://www.winooskinrcd.org)

The Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District is one of 14 conservation districts throughout Vermont. It encompasses all of Chittenden and Washington County as well as parts of Orange County (Orange, Williamstown and Washington). The District relies on grants and individual donations to complete its conservation work. The WNRCD focuses its resources on completing conservation projects within the areas of agricultural assistance, forestland enhancement, urban conservation and watershed stewardship. For more information on Conservation initiatives within the District, please visit: [www.winooskinrcd.org](http://www.winooskinrcd.org)



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