

Manure Containers Make Compost Easy!

Here are some easy ways to contain manure while creating valuable compost:

Single bin

This bin can easily be constructed from recycled materials. Pallets are available free of charge from many commercial businesses, warehouses, and shipping docks. Arrange pallets to form 3 or 4 sides of your bin (bottom is optional). Secure corners with twine or wire to allow for easy disassemble when compost is done. Re-assemble the bin next to the first pile to start a new one. Partly composted material on top of the original pile can be added to the new pile, leaving the composted material ready to use on gardens, landscaping, and pastures. A more permanent single bin system can be built of cinder blocks.



Triple bin

A 3 bin system takes a little more space and energy but allows for greater quantity of composting materials and easier turning of the material. Turning will aid in the composting process, increasing aeration.



In a 3 bin system material is added to one bin until it becomes full. This material is then transferred to the second bin to allow it to continue the composting process while material is added to the first bin, again until it becomes full. Material from bin 2 is transferred to bin 3 for more composting or storage until it is to be used.

Composting Tips:

Cover Manure

When composting manure, it is essential to cover it from rain. Yes, some moisture is needed in the composting process but just enough that the material is damp, not saturated.

Include Bedding

Composting manure with bedding (such as straw) will enhance the composting process by supplying organisms with a good carbon source.

Aeration

Turn, stir, or mix compost piles to maintain aerobic decomposition. Perforated PVC pipe or bundles of twigs can also be inserted in piles to aid in aeration.

Why Compost?

- Conserve natural resources
 - Reduce pollution
 - Infiltration
- Improve soil quality with:
 - Slow release nutrients
 - Air circulation
 - Water retention

Rotational Grazing Management and Composting



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Managing Pastures

During the year, these management practices will help keep your pastures healthy and productive:

- Begin grazing livestock when grass reaches 6-8" in height.
- Move livestock to the next field or to a sacrifice area when the grass is down to 3-4" in height.
- After moving the livestock harrow (drag) the field to spread manure to reduce parasites, and mow to a height of 4 inches to keep the weeds down and promote healthy growth.
- Always allow the pasture to rest between uses. The period of time will depend on weather and time of year, usually at least 2-4 weeks.
- Oregon weather changes quickly. Be sure that the ground is hard before letting your livestock out to graze.
- Grazing on soft ground for any length of time causes plant damage, reducing its strength and ability to grow.
- **Never graze below 3 inches.**

Weeds

Good pasture management includes getting rid of weeds that come up despite proper rotational use. The weeds can be controlled manually or by spray, depending on the types.

Sacrifice Area

During times that pastures are not in use, a sacrifice area is a great place to give your animals feed and exercise. These areas ideally will be mud-free and designed for all weather conditions.

Seasonal Notes

Winter & Spring

In winter plants are dormant to save energy for spring growth and need to maintain a substantial height. Overgrazing at this time is harmful to the health and longevity of the pasture.

In the spring plants take in many nutrients that in too large of doses can be harmful to horses.

Summer

Summer pastures can get too dry, so avoid grazing unless irrigation is part of your management plan.

If a pasture is irrigated make sure to let the ground harden before grazing.

Fall

Plants are working to reserve energy for the winter, so be extra careful not to overgraze.

If there is not enough pasture growth to allow the rotation to be managed in this way, then consider feeding some hay. Think of hay use at this time as another management tool that allows you to protect your pastures.



Over Grazed

Rotational Grazing

Manure Management

Manure management is very important to the upkeep of your property, neighborhood, and the environment. Consider manure storage. If rained on, manure will leach harmful nutrients into surface and groundwater. When planning where to store manure try to place it away from:

- Sources of clean water
- Low points on your land
- Anywhere that during a heavy rain has a sheet of water flowing across it

Manure should be placed on an impermeable surface and kept dry or composted.

For information on composting, assistance with manure storage designs, or financial programs, contact:



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