



INDUSTRIAL WASTE RESOURCE GUIDELINES

FARM WASTE MANAGEMENT

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Good waste management on farms is essential to ensure a healthy, safe and productive farming enterprise. Farmers, along with all Victorians have obligations under legislation to ensure that their wastes do not impact on the environment.

Inappropriate disposal of wastes on farms can cause contamination, pollution and increase your liability.

This guideline provides good practice waste management for farmers to minimise the potential for liability.

WHY IS WASTE MANAGEMENT AN ISSUE?

'Clean and green' agriculture is of increasing importance in the marketing of Australian produce, both domestically and overseas.

Appropriate management of farm wastes can benefit your farm by preventing:

- contamination impacting property value
- contamination of the land and water on your farm
- breeding sites for disease spreading mosquitos, pest animals and predators
- contamination of produce
- stock injury, disease or death
- offensive odours
- large penalties and clean-up costs from poor waste management.

Access to alternative disposal and recycling programs now provides farmers with more options for dealing with their waste.

EPA encourages waste disposal options in the following order of preference:

Avoid or reduce the production of wastes

When purchasing materials consider the costs of disposal. Effective waste management begins with purchasing only what you need.

Reuse and recycle wastes whenever possible

When purchasing materials it is important to check that the components and packaging can be easily reused or recycled. Sort all product waste into categories such as compost, recycling, empty drums, oil products, chemicals and general waste, so they can be efficiently reused, recycled or disposed of.

Ensure that wastes are stored appropriately prior to reuse, recycling or disposal to avoid contamination of the environment or harm to people, animals or produce.

Treat wastes where appropriate

Green wastes can be composted and reused as a fertiliser and soil conditioner. Composting green wastes will assist in destroying weed seeds.

Dispose of wastes only where permitted

You should not dispose of household rubbish, unwanted chemicals, waste oils or lubricants on your property due to the high risk of contamination of land, water or air.

Waste products that cannot be reused, recycled, composted or treated must be disposed of at a waste transfer station or appropriate landfill.

Licensed commercial waste disposal companies may also be an option for removing wastes from your farm. Refer to your local Yellow Pages for contacts or log onto the Industrial Waste Database: www.epa.vic.gov.au/waste/iwdb.

WASTE TYPES AND HOW TO MANAGE THEM

Scrap metals/used wire

Metal that can be reused for future works should be safely stored.

Any metal that cannot be reused may have recycling potential, even if it is rusted or burnt. Some companies will pay for and collect scrap metal. Contact your Regional Waste Management Group (RWMG) or local council for details of a metal recycler in your area.

Other wastes that can be collected/recycled include used fencing wire, vehicle bodies, and corrugated iron.

Masonry – concrete, bricks and tiles

Concrete and clean bricks may be reused for engineering works on your farm, provided the material

This guidance forms part of the Industrial Waste Resource Guidelines, which offer guidance for wastes and resources regulated under the *Environment Protection (Industrial Waste Resource) Regulations 2009*. Publication IWRG641 – June 2009.

is suitable for the purpose and is free from contamination from metal, plastics, chemicals and asbestos. Acceptable engineering works include the construction of farm tracks and pads.

If you accept wastes for disposal from other sources, reuse materials that are unsuitable for the purpose (industrial wastes etc) or fill areas of the farm with demolition material, you may be liable for illegal dumping, contamination, pollution and clean up.

Recycling facilities for masonry wastes are now available in some areas of Victoria: contact your RWMG or local council for further information.

Asbestos

Asbestos, in particular friable asbestos products, poses health risks during removal, transport and disposal. It is important, therefore, that asbestos be handled appropriately during these operations.

The disposal of waste asbestos, whether of industrial or domestic origin, is controlled by EPA. In addition, EPA controls the transportation of asbestos of industrial (including commercial or trade) origin.

Products made from asbestos should not be reused and cannot be recycled. These wastes must be handled appropriately and disposed of safely at a licensed landfill. There are licensed removal contractors available to perform this task.

If you are unsure or suspect you have asbestos materials, get someone to confirm this prior to removal. Asbestos products found on farms include: AC sheeting, buildings, cladding, lagging, roofing and pipes.

Refer to [IWRG Asbestos transport and disposal](#) for information on how to handle asbestos disposal appropriately. Further information on asbestos handling and disposal can also be found in the Department of Human Services (DHS) booklet, *Asbestos in the home*.

Empty chemical drums and used containers

All empty chemical drums should be triple-rinsed immediately after use to prevent the chemical residue from solidifying in the drum. Triple-rinsing should be directly into the spray tank or, if this is not possible, it should be performed in an area that will not contaminate the environment or impact on people, stock or produce.

Used containers can often be reused for repackaging and should be returned to the retailer.

Where containers are non-returnable, the following disposal options are available:

- DrumMUSTER: Is a national program for the collection and recycling of non-returnable, empty, cleaned crop production and on-farm animal health chemical containers. Eligible containers are

identified by a DrumMUSTER logo (sticker, label or embossed). For further information contact your local council or visit the DrumMUSTER website (www.drummuster.com.au) or phone 02 6230 6712.

- If the container is not eligible for DrumMUSTER, it should be triple rinsed, then punctured in the base and recycled or disposed of to appropriately licensed landfill. Contact local council for details of transfer stations or recycling services.

All empty containers should be stored in a safe area on the farm prior to reuse, recycling or disposal.

Chemicals (unwanted or excess)

ChemClear is a program to collect unwanted rural chemicals manufactured by member companies of Avcare and the Veterinary Manufacturers and Distribution Association (VDMA).

Users of agricultural and veterinary chemicals who need to dispose of their unwanted chemicals must register their products on the ChemClear website (www.chemclear.com.au) or by telephoning 1800 008 182.

For more information, contact the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) or your RWMG.

Oil and oil filters

Used oil is a valuable resource and can be collected from your farm by waste oil collection contractors (there may be minimum volumes for collection) or you can deliver it to approved premises. Please contact your council for further details of sites that can accept waste oil.

Used oil filters have a classification that prohibits their disposal to landfill as used oil filters can be recycled to recover both the metal and oil.

Using waste oil as a dust suppressant will cause contamination of the land and may cause pollution of surface or groundwaters. The clean up cost and potential impact on property value may result in significant liability to your farm.

Where there is a possibility that soil contamination has occurred (for example, from chemical or fuel/oil spills) you should contact EPA for further guidance.

Tyres

Tyres can be used for legitimate on-farm use (for example, on silage stacks), but should not be brought onto the farm for disposal. When not being used, tyres should be stored to minimise fire risk. Tyres lying around on a farm can become a breeding site for snakes predators and other vermin.

Waste tyres must not be:

- used for bulking material in civil engineering works

- used for erosion control works
- used for assisting burning (for example, stumps, dead stock)
- used for drains constructed from half tyres
- buried or burnt.

EPA also discourages the use of tyres as tree guards because of the fire risk.

If tyres cannot be reused on your farm, contact your RWMG or council for an appropriate recycling or disposal location.

Dead stock

Dead stock should be sent to the knackery or rendering plant for reuse or to an appropriately licensed landfill for disposal. If this is not possible, limited numbers of dead stock can be buried on a farm, as long as the burial site does not adversely impact the land, surface waters, groundwaters or the air (odour).

To reduce environmental impacts, an on-farm burial site should be set up as follows:

- on elevated land with a slope of less than five per cent
- at least two metres between the watertable and the base of the pit
- at least 200 metres from any surface waters
- at least 300 metres from neighbouring houses
- avoiding highly or moderately permeable soils.

You should also:

- cover the carcasses with at least one metre of soil
- where necessary, direct surface run-off away from the pit
- slightly mound the pit after backfilling.

You may want to install temporary fencing to assist reinstatement of the area.

If left in paddocks, dead stock can be a potential disease risk and could contaminate land and water.

The dead stock from intensive animal industries such as piggeries, feedlots and broiler or egg farms must not be buried on a farm without EPA approval. Where the operations are designed, managed and operated to ensure that there are no off-site impacts, dead stock can be composted contact EPA or DPI for further information.

Burning of dead stock should be avoided unless instructed by DPI.

Silage/feed wrapping and hay band/twine

To avoid contamination of produce, land and water, silage/feed wrapping and hay band/twine should be managed appropriately.

Silage wrap recycling programs operate throughout Victoria. Any silage wrap that cannot be recycled should be disposed of at your local transfer station or

landfill. Contact your RWMG or local council for details of a recycling program near you.

Hay band/twine can be recycled in some regions. If this is not possible in your area, hay band should be reused on the farm or disposed of at your local transfer station or landfill.

A condition of recycling of silage wrap and hay band is that the material is free from excess soil, plant material and other contaminants.

Treated timber

Treated timber contains toxic chemicals such as arsenic, chromium and copper. It must not be burnt, as the smoke and ash can impact on human health and contaminate soil and waters. Animals that consume residual ash may also be harmed.

Treated timber (CCA pine, creosote hardwoods) should be safely stored and reused for future works on your farm. Where this is not practical, it should be disposed of at a transfer station or landfill.

Tree and plant waste

Tree wastes can be left in place for natural habitation or used as firewood. Stubble can enhance soil structure and reduce erosion due to rainfall.

Burning tree, plant and stubble is an appropriate management practice where impacts are controlled. Air quality may be affected by the smoke and impact on human health. If you plan to burn tree and plant wastes, it is important to consider the following:

- Activities must comply with local laws. Contact your local council for details.
- You must not add other wastes such as tyres, hay band, silage wrap or domestic waste to the fire.
- The wind direction should be away from neighbours and other sensitive land uses such as homes, schools and towns.
- How wind direction and smoke may impact a highway or road and ensure that possible hazards (visibility) caused by smoke emissions are avoided.
- That the tree and plant material are dry (for efficient burning and less smoke).

The following areas should not be used for burning:

- where there is a possibility of any off-site impacts, including contamination of groundwater
- where the watertable is close to the surface
- within 100 metres of any surface waters
- areas that regularly drain into a natural water course or drainage line
- gullies or depressions and areas subject to flooding
- lagoons, wetlands, or old watercourses.

Recyclables

Deposit recyclables such as aluminium, glass and paper at your council's recycling depot, local recycling contractor or at the community recycling facility.

Household wastes

Kitchen scraps can be composted. Other household wastes should be disposed of via the services of a waste management contractor, or at the local landfill or waste transfer station.

Sustainability Victoria's free 'Detox Your Home' household chemical collection service accepts a range of domestic materials, including gas cylinders, batteries and fluorescent tubes, as well as a range of chemicals such as acids and oil paints.

WHAT ARE FARMERS' LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES?

The inappropriate disposal of farm wastes may be an offence under the *Environment Protection Act 1970*, or contravene a local municipal law.

This publication has been produced as a guide for the management of wastes on your farm. It does not provide an exhaustive list of waste types and management options available. If you are unsure about the appropriate management options for your wastes, contact your local council or EPA office for more information.



Before: Inappropriate waste disposal on a farm which poses a risk to stock, people and the environment.



After: Cleared area ready for revegetation.

RELATED EPA PUBLICATIONS

EPA publications are available for download from the EPA website at www.epa.vic.gov.au/publications.

[IWRG](#) Asbestos transport and disposal

[IWRG](#) Soil hazard categorisation and management

[IWRG](#) Used containers – transport and management

FURTHER INFORMATION

To contact EPA refer to the contents section of the [Industrial Waste Resource Guidelines](#) (IWRG).

Useful internet sites

For the contact details of your Regional Waste Management Group, go to the website of the Association of Victorian Regional Waste Management Groups.

www.vicregions.asn.au

Planet Ark's Recycling Near You website

www.recyclingnearyou.com.au

To find your local council's website, go to the website of the Municipal Association of Victoria.

www.mav.asn.au

Department of Primary Industries

www.dpi.vic.gov.au

DPI Customer Service Centre: 136 186

Recycling and disposal services

Sustainability Victoria: 1800 353 233.

www.sustainability.vic.gov.au

Department of Sustainability and Environment.

www.dse.vic.gov.au