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Commissioner

To All New York Dairy and Livestock Producers:

Many of you have struggled with limited options for carcass disposal during times of poor market conditions for cull cows. The NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets (AGM) is hopeful that normal slaughter capacity will resume shortly, however producers need to be prepared for the disposal of downed and dead animals. The following information is provided as guidance; however, these activities may also be subject to local law.

### **On-Farm Composting**

You may also choose to compost dead animals. Farms operating under a CAFO permit that choose to compost must do so in accordance with the 2014 Cornell Waste Management Institute recommendations "[Composting Animal Mortalities](#)" or the NY 316 Natural Resources Conservation Service Standards as planned in their CNMP.

For non-CAFO farms, you may compost mortalities onsite without a permit using [2014 Cornell Waste Management Institute recommendations](#). In addition, under State law, up to 10 carcasses per year can be from off-site sources, and the animal carcasses must be placed within the compost pile on the day received ([6 NYCRR Part 361-3.2\(a\)\(4\)](#)). To handle additional off-site animals, the farm must obtain a solid waste management facility registration under 6 NYCRR Part 361-3.2(b)(3). The registration forms and more information on organic waste management can be found [here](#).

### **On-Farm Burial**

On-farm burial may be a viable option for many farms. On-farm burial is regulated by the New York Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Refer to DEC regulation [6 NYCRR-NY 363-2.1\(b\)](#) (criteria found on **pages 257-258**) for guidance.

### **Animal Health Best Practices**

The Department strongly recommends the following precautions:

- Be decisive when it's time to cull an animal. Make the decision early while the cow is still marketable. With disposal being more difficult now, it is more likely that every dealer, market, and slaughter buyer will be refusing marginal (weak/nonthriving) calves and cull cows for fear that they will not make it successfully all the way to slaughter.
- If chemical euthanasia is used to dispatch an animal on the farm, the option for composting might be restricted due to chemical exposure to birds of prey, scavengers and neighbors' free-roaming dogs. You must take precautions to be sure that dogs, cats, and wildlife cannot gain access to the animals being composted.
- Do not delay burial or enclosure in a composting bed. The longer you wait to deal with a mortality, the more difficult the carcass will be to handle and the chances of spreading disease will increase.