Florida Solid and Hazardous Waste Regulation Handbook: Composting

Michael T. Olexa, Aaron Leviten, and Kelly Samek

How Is the Use of Compost Regulated?

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has established detailed regulations for the production and use of compost created from waste. These regulations exclude compost obtained from backyard composting and normal farming operations. Compost from these activities is exempt from regulation only if it is used on the property where it was composted, as part of the farming operation. Any compost that is sold must meet the requirements of the regulations.

Any facilities that produce compost commercially must obtain permits from the DEP and comply with detailed DEP regulations. You should contact DEP for more information on these regulations if you intend to commercially market compost generated from your agricultural operations, as they are quite complex.

What Wastes May Be Composted?

Wastes produced in "normal farming operations" (e.g., activities used in the production of poultry, livestock or agricultural crops) may be composted. Normal waste from these operations includes organic waste, manure and wastes derived solely from agricultural crops and normal household food wastes.

What Wastes May Not Be Composted?

Any biohazardous waste, used oil, or hazardous or asbestos-containing waste, except in the small quantities normally found in household waste, may not be composted.

What Uses of Compost Are Prohibited?

Compost from solid waste may never be used as fill material in any body of surface water. Also, DEP regulations prohibit any application of compost that would endanger public health or the environment.
Acknowledgments

The authors are indebted to the personnel of both state and federal agencies who gave their time and advice in the preparation of this handbook. The authors are also indebted to the following University of Florida personnel for a review and critique of the first draft of this publication: Dr. Thomas Dean, Pesticide Education Specialist, and Dr. Norman Nesheim, Pesticide Information Coordinator. Special recognition is also due to Mr. Richard Budell of the Office of Agricultural Water Policy of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for providing funds for the development of this handbook.

This handbook is designed to provide an accurate, current, and authoritative summary of the principal Florida laws that directly or indirectly relate to agriculture. It should provide a basic overview of the many rights and responsibilities farmers and farmland owners have under Florida laws. The reader is provided information about these rights and responsibilities and the appropriate contacts for more detailed information. However, the reader should be aware that because the laws, administrative rulings, and court decisions on which this publication is based are subject to constant revision, portions of this publication could become outdated at any time. Many details of cited laws are also left out due to space limitations.

This handbook is distributed with the understanding that the authors are not engaged in rendering legal or other professional advice and the information contained herein should not be regarded or relied upon as a substitute for professional advice. It is not all-inclusive in providing information to achieve compliance with laws and regulations governing the practice of agriculture. For these reasons, the use of these materials by any person constitutes an agreement to hold harmless the authors, UF/IFAS, the Agricultural Law Center, and the University of Florida for any liability claims, damages, or expenses that may be incurred by any person as a result of reference to or reliance upon the information contained in this publication.