Dog Manure for Fertilizer

Handling fecal waste is something all animal owners are familiar with, whether you have one cat, 50 dogs, or livestock. Kennel owners need to plan ahead and have a system in place to remove and handle animal waste to ensure dogs stay clean and pest problems do not develop.

While state and federal kennel standards do not dictate which waste-management method to use, inspectors will look for enclosures and runs that are clean and well maintained in terms of waste management with minimal odor.

State and federal commercial dog breeding rules require an operation's animal waste, food waste, and bedding waste be removed frequently and the drainage system constructed in a way that waste and water are rapidly eliminated so animals stay dry.

Many kennel owners find using a septic system to be the most feasible way to handle dog waste. If a kennel does not have access to the equipment to pump and land apply the manure, a commercial company can empty the septic tank on a regular schedule.

For some kennel owners, land application is an economical way to dispose of animal waste and add fertilizer nutrients to fields for agricultural crops. Dog manure may be applied to fields similar to livestock manure. Using this method, kennel owners need to construct an area to hold the dog manure until it can be land applied. A holding area could be a lagoon, sump, or settlement pond.

The holding area must be located far enough away from the animal area or housing facility to prevent odors, diseases, pests, and vermin infestation. Consideration should also be given to environmental limitations and land availability.

The Indiana State Board of Animal Health (BOAH) has received questions recently about land-application requirements for licensed breeding facilities. Regulations for land applying animal waste as fertilizer are overseen by the Office of Indiana State Chemist (OISC).

OISC has fertilizer use rules for manure that govern application rates, restrictions and setbacks. The rules, 355 IAC 8, are applicable for anyone who uses more than 10 cubic yards or 4,000 gallons of fertilizer or manure in a calendar year.

The following table shows the setback distance needed between the edge of the waste application area and a water way and other known geographic feature.

Table 1 – Unmanipulated Organic Fertilizer Application Setback Distances (in feet)				
Known Feature	Liquid – Injection or Single Pass Incorporation (liquid/solid)	Liquid – Incorporation; Surface Application (solid or compost); or Surface Application to Pasture	Liquid – Surface Application	
			< 6% Slope; or Residue Cover	> 6% Slope
Public Water Supply Wells and Surface Intake	500	500	500	500
Surface Waters	25	50	100	200
Sinkholes	25	50	100	200
Water Wells	50	50	100	200
Drainage Inlets	5	50	100	200
Property Lines and Public Roads	0	10	50	50

Liquid incorporation in Table 1 means only unmanipulated organic fertilizer that has been incorporated into the soil within 24 hours of application.

If you have questions about the land application of dog kennel manure, contact the Office of Indiana State Chemist at: 765-494-1492. More information is available on the OISC website at: www.oisc.purdue.edu.