



environmental farm plan
sustainably farmed

INFOSHEET #6

DISPOSAL OF FARM WASTES

How to address concerns identified
in Environmental Farm Plan Worksheet #6

Based on Environmental Farm
Plan Workbook, 5th ed. 2025

This infosheet outlines options to address concerns identified in your Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) as they relate to disposal of farm wastes.

For help with technical terms, please see the full glossary in your EFP Workbook.



All options in this infosheet are classed as **Actions**, **Compensating Factors**, or **Monitoring**.

- **Actions** address the identified concern, and will change the EFP rating to (3) or (4) Best.
- **Compensating Factors** are alternatives that will adequately address the concern, but will not change the rating in the EFP worksheet.
- **Monitoring** is an alternative in special circumstances only. When and how monitoring can be used is explained in the infosheet.

In most cases, you'll need more information before choosing and implementing options. Sources for more information are noted at the end of this infosheet.

WASTE ANIMAL HEALTH PRODUCTS AND EQUIPMENT

6-1. Unwanted or expired products

BACKGROUND

Avoid accumulating quantities of leftover animal health care products.

Improper storage can pose risks to people, livestock and pets. An abundance of leftover products increases the potential for loss and deterioration of product quality.

Animal health care products include drugs, medicines, ointments, insect repellents, vaccines, disinfectants, cleaners, rodenticides, and fumigants that do not have a Pesticide Control Product (PCP) number.

All livestock medicines have a Drug Identification Number (DIN) or a New Animal Drug Application (NADA) number.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

OPTION 1 – ACTION

Use up materials for their intended and registered purpose wherever possible.

Ensure proper storage in the original container with the label (helps to prevent medication errors):

- keep materials in original containers
- use a locked storage to help protect products from temperature changes, sunlight, dust, moisture, animals, insects, and children
- be aware that most antibiotics are heat-sensitive and best stored between 2°C and 8°C

Dispose of unwanted products in a responsible manner:

- return to place of purchase – discuss protocols with your veterinarian
- hire a commercial disposal company
- take to local hazardous waste depot – check with your municipality for details



Avoid accumulating quantities of leftover animal health care products. Always keep them in their original containers in an appropriate storage.

For more information about safe handling of livestock medicines and related products, see this OMAFA factsheet:

[Safe on-farm storage of unwanted medicines and sharps](#)

6-2. Animal health equipment

BACKGROUND

Needles, used syringes, scalpel blades, and similar devices used to administer medication can be dangerous if not disposed of properly and should never be put in your regular garbage.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

OPTION 1 – ACTION

Store in an approved commercial container, or use a leakproof, rigid container (not glass).

Keep in an appropriate storage area on the farm until disposed of by a medical waste handling company:

- consult with the medical waste company, hazardous waste depot staff, or your veterinarian
- do not place liquids such as bleach in the container as a disinfectant, as this may create a hazardous chemical reaction

OPTION 2 – ACTION

Dispose of used equipment immediately at a hazardous waste depot:

- consult with the medical waste company, hazardous waste depot staff, or your veterinarian



Store waste animal health equipment in a closed, leakproof, rigid container. Do not use glass.

WASTE FILMS AND PACKAGING

6-3. Plastic films (greenhouse plastic, hoop houses, silage bags, bale wrap, grain storage, field mulches, etc.)

BACKGROUND

The use of plastic film coverings in agriculture has proliferated in recent years with the increase in greenhouses, over-wintering hoop houses, plastic mulches for crops, and feed wraps.

Disposal has become an issue. Burning or burying the plastic film is a violation of legislation.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

OPTION 1 – ACTION

Reuse as much as possible:

- consider reusing plastic films for lining truck boxes, covering machinery, lining backyard skating rinks, etc.

OPTION 2 – ACTION

Recycle through a plastic recycling company:

- ensure coverings are clean, dry, sorted into similar types of materials, and compacted as much as reasonable – some farmers use hay balers to compact plastic wrap, although it must be done safely
- check with the recycler for your best collection strategy

OPTION 3 – ACTION

Dispose at an approved waste management facility:

- call ahead for information – not all sites will accept these wastes



The use of plastic film coverings in agriculture has expanded in recent years. Repurpose them whenever possible.



6-4. Other plastics (film or woven bags, jugs and pails, pot trays and cells, lined/unlined bags, drip irrigation pipe, bird netting, net wraps, etc.)

BACKGROUND

Used packaging materials, containers and other items can accumulate on the farm.

Burning or burying them is unacceptable. Either approach can pollute air, water and soil, and violates legislation.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

OPTION 1 – ACTION

Reuse as much as possible.

Farmers are quite innovative when it comes to reusing these materials.

OPTION 2 – ACTION

Ensure packaging materials are empty and clean (not pristine), then recycle where a local program exists.

OPTION 3 – ACTION

Dispose of materials that cannot be reused or recycled at an approved waste management facility.

6-5. Paper products (cardboard, fruit, vegetable and flower shipping containers, paper and jute bags, crates/baskets/pallets)

BACKGROUND

Used packaging and paper products can accumulate on the farm.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

OPTION 1 – ACTION

Use up the products and recycle the containers where local programs exist.

OPTION 2 – ACTION

Dispose at an approved waste management facility, provided the cardboard containers are empty:

- check with your municipality to see which products they will accept



Reuse and recycle paper products as much as possible. Burning or burying these products is not recommended.

WASTE FARM BUILDING COMPONENTS

6-6. Recyclable farm building components (concrete, stone, blocks, bricks, wood frames, sheet steel, glass, shingles, fencing, wire)

BACKGROUND

Piles of old building rubble can be a safety hazard on the farm. It can be dangerous to people and livestock because of sharp materials such as metal, wood, glass and concrete.

Burning these materials causes air pollution and may be a violation of legislation.

Piles of this material become excellent nesting locations for vermin.

Concrete, stone, blocks, bricks, etc. that are painted, contaminated with soluble or decomposable chemical substances, or have exposed iron rebar should not be used as fill, or as material to prevent soil erosion.



Most uncontaminated building components can be recycled or reused.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

OPTION 1 – ACTION

Reuse and recycle as many items as possible.

Farmers are quite innovative at finding uses for old materials.

Some buildings can be relocated as a unit or disassembled and reassembled in a new location. Demolition companies will remove buildings for a fee.

OPTION 2 – ACTION

Sort similar materials and send to a waste management facility approved to receive uncontaminated construction building components, such as:

- stone, block and concrete foundations, brick, wood studs, wood poles, steel framing, sheet steel, plywood, and wood cladding, trusses, shingles and concrete or steel silos

Most building components are inert and will not harm the environment. However, preservative materials such as lead paint or pressure-treated wood could cause problems.

OPTION 3 – ACTION

Dispose of at an approved waste management facility.

6-7. Non-recyclable farm building components (composite products, pressure-treated lumber, asbestos, etc.)

BACKGROUND

Burning and/or burying materials on the farm can pose risks to people and livestock through polluted air and ground water and is a violation of legislation.

Many wood materials have been chemically treated to last longer and should not be burned on the farm.

Asbestos fibre can cause respiratory problems and must be handled with extreme care.

Some insulation materials are flammable and give off dense chemical smoke if burned.



Materials that cannot be reused or recycled should be taken to an approved waste management facility, or a hazardous waste depot for hazardous wastes.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

OPTION 1 – ACTION

Reuse as many items as possible.

OPTION 2 – ACTION

Take materials that cannot be reused or recycled to an approved waste management facility, or a hazardous waste depot for hazardous wastes:

- legislation concerning disposal of asbestos waste is outlined in Section 17 of Regulation 347, Environmental Protection Act
- the cost of separating and transporting can be prohibitive – in many cases demolition companies will remove all the material for a fee

WASTE DEVICES THAT USED ENERGY TO OPERATE

6-8. Electronics

BACKGROUND

Electronic products, such as computers, televisions, DVD players and hand-held devices, should be recycled.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

OPTION 1 – ACTION

If an electronic product still operates properly, donate it to a charitable organization or a school.

OPTION 2 – ACTION

Use the [RPRA Where to Recycle map](#) to find a drop off location nearest to you.

OPTION 3 – ACTION

Take old electronics to an approved waste management facility.



6-9. Equipment and appliances that contain refrigerants (refrigerators, freezers, air conditioners)

BACKGROUND

Some appliances and equipment, contain CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons, also called freon), which can damage the earth's ozone layer if improperly released.

Some appliances can be an immediate danger to children. Unless properly decommissioned, the door latches of refrigerators and freezers can engage, confining a child and leading to suffocation.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

OPTION 1 – ACTION

Reuse or recycle, if possible:

- call your municipality for information on the proper removal of the refrigerant, decommissioning and disposal

OPTION 2 – ACTION

Arrange for a certified person to remove the refrigerants and properly tag the machine:

- then send the machine to a scrap dealer or an approved waste management facility

For more information about recycling electronics, and to find a drop site near you, go to: <https://rpri.ca/where-to-recycle/>

6-10. Machinery, equipment, and appliances not containing refrigerants

BACKGROUND

Old, deteriorating vehicles and equipment can be a hazard to people and livestock. As well, they make excellent hiding/nesting areas for vermin.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

OPTION 1 – ACTION

Reuse as much as possible because waste management facilities may not take these items.

OPTION 2 – ACTION

Take to a scrap metal dealer:

- sort out higher value metal (e.g., copper, aluminium)
- do not include pressurized containers (e.g., propane tanks) in scrap loads – this is a safety hazard, and loads will be rejected

OPTION 3 – COMPENSATING FACTOR

Store safely on the farm for future disposal.



Do not include pressurized containers (e.g., propane tanks) in scrap loads.



A trade allowance is usually given when purchasing a new replacement battery.

6-11. Batteries

BACKGROUND

“Batteries” includes all kinds of batteries – from small ones for handheld appliances to the lead acid types.

Batteries can cause serious water quality problems and health concerns because of the lead or nickel-cadmium content.

Lead acid batteries have scrap value, and a trade allowance is usually given if purchasing a new replacement battery. Old, stockpiled batteries can be recycled.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

OPTION 1 – ACTION

Take batteries to a scrap metal dealer or recycling location.

OPTION 2 – ACTION

Store in a dry secure location until recycled:

- for more information, see <https://rpra.ca/where-to-recycle/>

OPTION 3 – ACTION

Store rechargeable batteries individually to prevent creating a fire hazard.

WASTE PRESERVATIVES

6-12. Lubricating oils and oil filters from farm activities

BACKGROUND

Vehicles on Ontario's farms collectively use millions of litres of oil each year, much of which can be reused.

The safe disposal or reuse of used oil is important to reduce the risk to water quality and the risk of fire.

Dumping, burying, or burning on the farm or in a non-approved appliance is a violation of legislation. Oil must not be used for dust suppression.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

OPTION 1 – ACTION

Reuse as a lubricant on equipment, being sure not to apply too much:

- light oiling of stable cleaner chains is a one possible reuse

OPTION 2 – ACTION

Take to an approved hazardous waste depot, selected waste depot, or used oil recycling depot:

- See RPRA for Where to Recycle map at <https://rpra.ca/where-to-recycle/>

OPTION 3 – ACTION

Hire an approved Ministry of the Environment Conservation and Parks carrier or contractor to manage liquid hazardous wastes and used oil filters.



Roughly 50% of the 1 billion litres of lubricating oils sold annually in Canada can be recovered for reuse.



Store antifreeze in a properly labelled container to prevent accidental poisoning.

6-13. Antifreeze

BACKGROUND

Ethylene glycol poisoning occurs when it is ingested and is the primary ingredient in both automotive antifreeze and hydraulic brake fluid.

Ethylene glycol is a toxic, colourless, odourless liquid with a sweet taste. Glycolic acid and oxalic acid are the cause of the toxicity.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

OPTION 1 – ACTION

Take unwanted antifreeze to an approved hazardous waste depot or selected waste depot:

- See RPRA for Where to Recycle map at <https://rpra.ca/where-to-recycle/>

OPTION 2 – ACTION

Hire an approved Ministry of the Environment Conservation and Parks carrier or contractor to manage hazardous wastes.

Note that a mix of oil and antifreeze, however slight, will not be accepted.

For more recycling information:

Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority (RPRA) – Where to Recycle

6-14. Paints and coatings

BACKGROUND

“Paints and coatings” include: latex and alkyd (oil-based) paints, primer and base coats, and water and solvent-based stains and coatings.

These products can be dangerous if not stored and used in the recommended way.



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

OPTION 1 – ACTION

Store securely and use up as needed.

OPTION 2 – ACTION

Contact your municipality to see if donation/reuse opportunities are available:

- some municipalities have drop-offs where unwanted paint is stored and can be used by anyone in need of paint

OPTION 3 – ACTION

Take to an approved hazardous waste depot or selected waste depot:

- your local Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change office can supply locations
- See RPRA for Where to Recycle map at <https://rp.ca/where-to-recycle/>

Visit <https://rp.ca/where-to-recycle/> to find the nearest location that accepts unwanted paints.

MISCELLANEOUS WASTES

6-15. Tires from farm machinery or vehicles on the farm

BACKGROUND

In large quantities, piles of tires can be a fire or safety hazard. Deterioration could lead to environmental contamination.

Also, tires can hold stagnant water and are an excellent breeding ground for mosquitoes, including those carrying the West Nile virus.

Provincial laws govern how many tires can be stored in one location, at one time without a permit from Ministry of the Environment Conservation and Parks. Never burn tires as they give off a dense, chemical smoke. Dumping or burning tires is a violation of legislation.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

OPTION 1 – ACTION

Return the tires to your tire dealer.

OPTION 2 – ACTION

Take the tires to an approved hazardous waste depot offering this service for solid non-hazardous wastes.

OPTION 3 – ACTION

Reuse in limited quantities for other purposes on the farm.

Visit <https://rp.ca/where-to-recycle> for locations nearest to you that accept unwanted tires.



Old tires can be reused for other purposes on the farm such as holding down tarps over feed.



Many retailers accept refillable containers if replacements are being purchased.

6-16. Pressurized containers (acetylene, oxygen, helium, propane, nitrogen, fire extinguishers and other compressed gases)

BACKGROUND

Pressurized containers can leak or even explode when exposed to fluctuating temperatures, humidity or pressure.

Exploding pressurized tanks have killed people.

Many retailers accept refillable containers if replacements are being purchased.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

OPTION 1 – ACTION

Securely store pressurized containers outside until you can return to the retailer:

- store where they are safe from tampering and toppling
- avoid direct sun
- transport in a secure upright position on a flat surface

OPTION 2 – ACTION

Take to an approved hazardous waste depot or selected waste depot:

- find a location that accepts non-refillable containers at <https://rp.ca/where-to-recycle/>
- transport in a secure upright position on a flat surface

6-17. Devices containing mercury (thermometers, barometers, manometers, electrical switches, fluorescent light bulbs and thermostats)

BACKGROUND

Mercury is toxic, even small mercury spills should be considered hazardous and should be cleaned up with caution. Products containing mercury should be recycled or disposed of properly.

It is a violation of legislation to dispose of any device containing mercury by dumping or burial.

Products that may include mercury include compact fluorescent lights (CFLs), some paints, and old batteries, thermostats and fuel sensors.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

OPTION 1 – ACTION

Take materials containing mercury to an approved hazardous waste depot or selected waste depot. Transport in a secure upright position on a flat surface.



Unlike incandescent lights, which can be disposed of safely in the regular garbage, CFLs contain mercury, which can have significant impacts on both human health and the environment. Some large retailers accept them. They must be disposed of properly, through an approved hazardous waste depot or selected waste depot.



A farm dump can reduce a property's resale value, especially if its contents are unknown or hazardous.

6-18. On-farm garbage dumps

BACKGROUND

Many farms have small dumps containing wastes that may have been there for many years. Take a careful inventory of these dumps to determine if there is a safety concern for people, livestock, wildlife or the environment.

Assuming the wastes were generated on the same farm where the inactive dump is located and there are no offsite impacts, it is unlikely that its presence will be an immediate issue. However, there could be liability issues upon refinancing or resale.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

OPTION 1 – ACTION

Confirm there is no dump on the farm:

- conduct a thorough investigation of areas, such as in the bush, in areas that are not farmed, gravel pits and ravines

OPTION 2 – ACTION

If a dump is found and if materials can be safely removed, take them to an approved waste disposal facility.

OPTION 3 – ACTION

If a small amount of inert materials is stored on site, fence it off to prevent entry:

- this includes wood, concrete or bricks providing the site is dry and fenced
- remove hazardous materials – obtain professional assistance if necessary

FOR MORE INFORMATION

ONTARIO MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND AGRIBUSINESS (OMAFRA)

- Agricultural Information Contact Centre (AICC)
Toll free: 1-877-424-1300 | e-mail: ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca
Find most of the resources listed below at www.ontario.ca

Factsheets

- Safe on-farm storage of unwanted medicines and sharps

ONTARIO MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT, CONSERVATION AND PARKS

- Public Information Centre, Toll-free: 1-800-565-4923

INDUSTRY PROGRAMS

- Empty Pesticide Container Recycling and Obsolete Pesticide Disposal (Cleanfarms.ca); Toll-free: 1-877-622-4460
- Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority
 - Where to Recycle

LEGISLATION/ACTS

- Environmental Protection Act, 1990