

21 JUN 2013

DEP Act

OUT13/15762

Mr C Kane
Director Environmental Planning
Greater Hume Shire
40 Balfour Street
Culcairn NSW 2660

Dear Mr Kane

Thank you for seeking this Departments advise concerning further issues relating to the proposed Gerogery-Resource Recovery Composting Operation.

Advice regarding the two issues is as follows:

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE)

Is not known in Australia and there is a 'Targeted Surveillance Program' undertaken by Agriculture NSW which confirms this position.

Further it is internationally recognised that Australia is BSE free.

So until that situation alters it is not possible for the BSE prion to be contained in the compost.

National Vendor Declaration (Cattle) and Waybill

Provided the material is composted as outlined by the proponents it is accepted that no meat and fat residues will be present in the compost.

Cleanaway have responded that they can provide this assurance.

Therefore cattle producers should have no difficulty answering NO to Question 2 in the declaration.

As a result of your enquiry Animal Health Australia were contacted regarding the above issues and have provided the following response:

"On reading the letter from The Greater Hume Shire my understanding of what the residents are concerned about is the spreading of the composted material (containing fats and residues) and the implications associated with the ruminant feed ban. However, it could also be understood to mean that there are implications associated with spreading this material and contracting Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE). I will provide answers to both interpretations.

The spreading of composted material on agricultural land for cropping and grazing purposes is now seen as a normal practice undertaken throughout Australia. It operates on the premise of buyer beware and is the responsibility of the farmer to ensure they are not causing problems off-site (odour, runoff, nutrient leaching, etc) or with the stock that is grazing the vegetation being grown (residues, ruminant feed ban, etc). The composting of livestock is a common practice in Australian feedlots, abattoirs, piggeries and poultry operations and the composted material is used widely as a soil ameliorant/conditioner. To ensure that a breach of the Ruminant feed ban does not occur the producer

must manage the time between application and grazing and the incorporation of compost into the soil where possible. It is recommended that a period of three weeks is imposed between application and grazing. This is however dependant on season and growth of vegetation after application of the composted material and needs to be monitored by the producer.

It must be noted that the total composting of animals can be completed in as short as an eight week period with no meat/fat residues being identifiable and just long bones left. The quality of the final product is extremely high – it is not as if there is going to be lumps of fat and meat sitting in the paddock once the composted product has been spread.

In relation to the contracting of BSE by grazing cattle, this will only occur if the BSE prion is available for consumption. Australia is well respected for its BSE safeguard measures and known internationally as being free from BSE – OIE negligible risk status. The growing of vegetation to a height where stock will not be eating dirt/compost will also mitigate any possibility of consumption on the smallest of possibilities that the prion was available. The composting procedure has not been proven to eliminate the prion, but first the prion must be present."

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Davis', with a stylized flourish at the end.

David Davis
Resource Management Officer

19 June 2013