

Best Environmental Management Practices

Farm Animal Production

Disposal of Farm Medical Wastes

*Dan Grooms, Michigan State University
Sandy Amass, Purdue University*

Livestock producers can potentially generate medical waste on a daily basis. These wastes include:

Sharps

- ✓ Needles
- ✓ Syringes
- ✓ Scalpels

Drug containers

- ✓ Empty drug or vaccine vials
- ✓ Outdated drugs

As stewards of the environment, livestock producers should take precautions to assure that medical wastes do not become hazards to themselves, their families, their operations or the community.

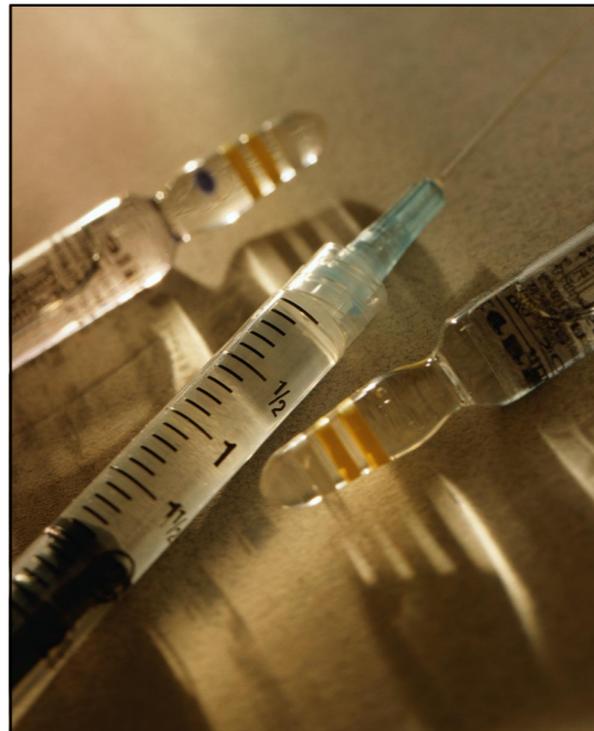
Sharps

Sharps commonly used on farms include needles, syringes and scalpels. If not disposed of properly they can

- ✓ Injure livestock
- ✓ Injure family members
- ✓ Injure waste handlers
- ✓ Increase the risk of infection
- ✓ Pollute the environment

Sharps should be collected on the farm in a rigid puncture resistant container that has a screw-on or tightly secured lid. Containers specifically designed for this purpose can be purchased from health suppliers including your local veterinarian.

Other potential “sharps” containers, while not as satisfactory as special purpose ones, include an empty, thick-walled detergent bottle or an empty



5-gallon drum. Glass bottles, thin walled jugs, such as milk jugs, coffee cans, pop cans or plastic bags are not acceptable for disposing of sharps.

When on the road (livestock shows), make sure to bring small “sharps” disposal containers as well as bags to carry other medical wastes back to the farm.

Containers should be visibly labeled identifying it as a biohazard waste container. To avoid accidental recycling, clearly label the container as nonrecyclable. When the container is full, it should be sealed and the lid firmly secured. Duct or packaging tape works well to secure the lids.

Disposal of sharps may be regulated by your state. Contact the agency in your state that is in charge of overseeing the disposal of medical wastes. A list of these agencies can be found at the following EPA Web site:

www.epa.gov/epaoswer/osw/stateweb.htm

Alternatively, you may be able to identify a veterinarian, hospital, pharmacy, physician or dentist office that will accept farm or household generated medical wastes. Some states have registered “sharps” collection stations.

Used Drug Containers

Empty or partially empty drug containers should be properly disposed of to reduce the risk of environmental contamination with chemicals or infectious agents. These include, among others:

Injectable medications

- ✓ Antibiotics
- ✓ Vitamins and minerals
- ✓ Mastitis tubes

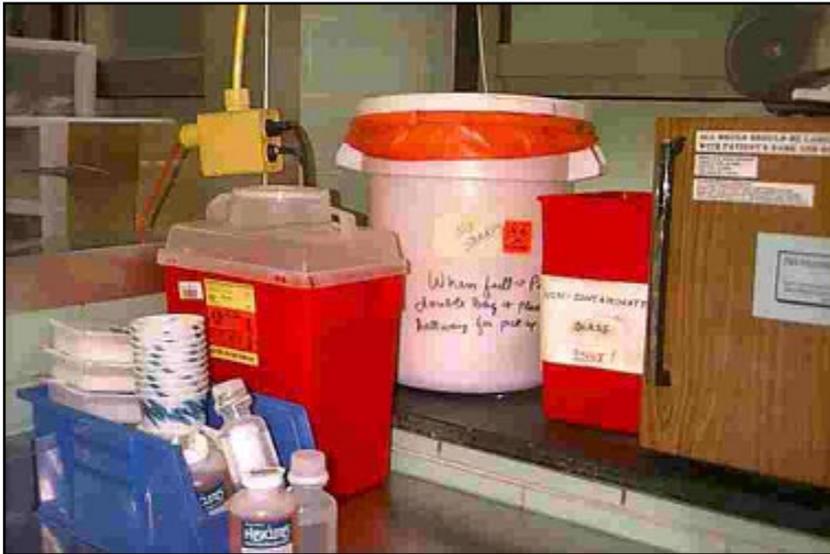
Oral medications

- ✓ Dewormers
- ✓ Antibiotics
- ✓ Vitamins and minerals

Topical Medications

- ✓ Sprays
- ✓ Dewormers
- ✓ Ointments





Vaccines

Always carefully read the manufacturers' label recommendations for disposing of empty or partially empty drug containers. Most can be burned or disposed of in a sanitary landfill. Unused products should not be dumped down a drain or on the ground. Disinfectant should be added to unused portions of live or modified-live vaccines to reduce the accidental exposure to unintended populations. Broken glass vials should be placed in a rigid cardboard box and clearly labeled as "Broken Glass."

Unused drugs or vaccines that have become outdated should be disposed of properly. They can often be returned to the manufacturer or to the place of purchase for proper disposal.

Miscellaneous Medical Waste

Other medical waste that may be generated on livestock farms include

- ✓ Bandages
- ✓ Medical gloves

These items should be placed in securely fastened leak proof bags before putting them in with the rest of your trash.

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