



FACT SHEET – Agriculture Exemptions

Rural Nevada is dotted with ranches that may not have convenient access to landfills and other solid waste facilities. Nevada environmental regulations offer some exemptions to agriculture from solid waste management regulatory requirements. Rather than regulating individual ranches, the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection's Solid Waste Branch focuses primarily on public disposal sites and municipal solid waste management systems. The Division does not conduct routine inspections of solid waste generators and the Solid Waste Branch does not foresee inspecting any Nevada ranches unless specific complaints are received regarding violations of solid waste regulations.

Can ranches and farms bury their wastes?

Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 444.620.1 states that: "No plan for a solid waste management system adopted pursuant to NRS 444.440 to 444.616, inclusive, applies to any agricultural activity or agricultural waste." This means that wastes that are generated directly from agricultural activities are not subject to solid waste regulations. Such wastes as crop residues, manure, animal carcasses, baling twine and wire are included in the exemption. The solid waste standards do not prohibit a farm or ranch owner from applying them onto the land or burying them in the ground; however, some wastes cannot be buried on site, e.g., household waste and special wastes such as vehicle batteries, tires, waste oil, appliances, etc. Such wastes should be handled through the waste management system established pursuant to the local government's solid waste management plan.

As a side note, it is worth adding that the volume of household waste requiring off-site disposal can be reduced through on-site composting of organic matter such as food and yard waste.

Can ranches and farms burn their wastes?

Air quality regulations (NAC 445B.381.2(d) and NAC 445B.382.6) allow open burning and the use of single chamber incinerators (burn barrels), under certain conditions, at single family residences in remote areas of the state, i.e., except within one mile of the boundaries of certain listed cities, towns and areas. The Division cautions such exempted ranches and farms from burning household waste, garbage, plastics, synthetic products or other materials which are likely to produce toxic air pollutants or generate significant quantities of smoke. These wastes should be managed as noted above.

Please note that the exemptions from the general prohibition against open burning and from the general incinerator restrictions apply to single-family residences in the qualifying areas, but not to wastes generated by the agricultural operation. For information on agricultural burning, please call the Bureau of Air Quality Planning (775) 687-9444.

In summary, on-site burial of certain agricultural wastes is allowable under solid waste regulations. Additionally, single-family residences in designated remote areas are allowed to open burn or use burn barrels under certain conditions according to air quality regulations. Persons who qualify for these exemptions must observe applicable legal

limitations and local ordinances, and should exercise caution with regard to fire danger and the potential for threats to the environment and public health. While the exemptions are intended to take into account the unique conditions attending agriculture and residence in remote areas, they do not eliminate the need to comply with the local community waste management infrastructure.

Contacts

Questions regarding solid waste regulations should be directed to the Bureau of Waste Management at (775) 687-9462.

Questions regarding air quality regulations should be directed to the Bureau of Air Quality at (775) 687-9444.