

# EVALUATING MANURE

Plymouth County Conservation District

There's a lot that goes into manure piles- literally! When was the last time you took a close look at yours?

## WHAT'S IN YOUR PILE?

Chances are you know exactly what goes into your pile- because you put it there yourself! You should still take some time to dig into the pile and make some observations

When you break into your pile, use all five of your senses.

If you feel heat or see steam, that means the microbes in the pile are hard at work digesting and decomposing the poop.

What do you smell? It is an earthy smell similar to soil? Or is it a more putrid smell?

Don't be afraid to touch it! (You might want a pair of gloves) When you squeeze it, does excess water come out? Does it hold shape when it releases?

Does it look like the bedding and poop have decomposed into a dark, crumbly material?

Have you heard your neighbors complain?



# ONE LAST LOOK

Before you leave your pile, take one last look at the pile's surroundings! These surroundings have the potential to cause legal and environmental issues.

Where is your pile located? Is there any water nearby, like a stream, swamp or vernal pool? What's around for vegetation?

Manure piles are infamous for their potential to pollute water sources with nutrient run-off. Keeping the area around the pile well vegetated with grasses acts almost like a filter and reduces run off.

What about your neighbors?

Most towns recommend keeping manure piles at least 200 feet from property lines. but it's also important to be aware of any wells that might be nearby, if your neighbors are downwind and your towns regulations to avoid any trouble.

# FINAL THOUGHTS

Taking the time to look at your manure pile is important to identify any current or future problems. It gives you the opportunity to find a solution and maybe even improve the quality of your manure for any at home gardens or field application.

If you're looking for more resources for your manure pile, check out our website for a couple of interesting links, or email us at [PlymouthCCD.Ofiice@gmail.com](mailto:PlymouthCCD.Ofiice@gmail.com).

