

Comparing composting costs

Farmers opting for a manure compost system will run costs comparable to a daily haul system, according to an analysis done by researchers at Bloomsburg University, Pennsylvania.

Factoring in all costs associated with just the manure operation of a 120 cow herd:

- a liquid lagoon costs \$14,000 (U.S. funds) per year;
- daily haul is \$8,000/year;
- and composting (using a windrow turner, fleece cover, and a cement pad close by) is in the \$8,000/year range.

Where the real difference is found is how labour is allocated to different areas.

In liquid lagoon and daily haul systems everything is transported to a field at a specific time during the year. With composting, the volume of manure is cut in half, and the remaining material is lighter. Less, lighter material means less time is spent on transportation and there remains the possibility of spreading when it is only warranted by the cropping system. Composting manure acts as a nutrient storage system.