

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets: Policy on Swine Garbage Feeding

Revised April 1, 2013

Background

Vermont state statutes do not allow the feeding of prohibited food waste to swine or the supplying of the waste itself to others for the purpose of feeding to swine. Prohibited food waste is defined in 6 V.S.A. § 1671 as all waste material derived from the meat of any animal (including fish and poultry) and refuse of any character that has been associated (handling, preparation, cooking, disposal, or consumption) with meat and meat products. The purpose of this law is to prevent the introduction into Vermont of economically devastating animal diseases transmitted through this practice, with the Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak in the United Kingdom serving as an example of how this can occur.

This guidance document was developed based on input from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets' (VAAFMM) State and Assistant State Veterinarian and Meat Inspection Program managers, in consultation with USDA-APHIS-VS' Veterinary Medical Officer and Animal Health Technician. The development of this document in support of existing statute was deemed necessary based on reports of noncompliance detected during VAAFMM retail inspections and USDA site inspections, as well as an increasing number of inquiries fielded from swine producers and recyclers in anticipation of implementation of Act 148.

High-Risk Feed Sources

The determination if organic waste (such as produce, bread products, certain dairy products) is acceptable to collect and feed to swine depends on the nature of the brick and mortar establishment that would be providing the waste. Any establishment where meat (cooked or raw) is present or could be present is considered a high-risk source. Examples of high-risk sources include grocery stores, cafeterias, and bakeries. Bakeries are considered to be a high-risk source as they often serve sandwiches or pastries containing meat. Contamination can occur in grocery stores and cafeterias through the cross-contamination by workers who handle meat and then handle produce, dairy, or bakery products or by the placement of meat-containing products in containers/barrels with non-prohibited waste, such as produce. Once a product has been contacted by meat, it is considered to be contaminated; removal of the meat does not remove the contamination that has already occurred.

The Agency of Agriculture strongly recommends that these types of establishments do not provide organic waste to farmers if it will subsequently be provided to pigs as a feed source. Stores that do provide such material should have policies and protocols in place that prevent contamination and they should be in communication with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture for review of the prevention practices. Stores should contact the Animal Health Section of the Agency at 802-828-2421.

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Other Feed Sources

As the law allows the feeding of processed dairy products to swine, it would be acceptable provide this type of waste, including pasteurized and unpasteurized whey. It is also acceptable to provide bread products from a bread manufacturer's outlet.

Best Practices

VAAFM asks that farmers who feed waste to swine maintain an awareness of the statute and ensure that they do not feed their pigs meat or meat products, waste that contains meat or meat products, or waste that has been contaminated by meat or meat products.

VAAFM asks that facilities that provide organic waste to producers ensure they are not providing contaminated materials to producers who feed waste to swine as they are violating 6 VSA 1671 and are subject to administrative penalties. Please communicate with individuals who source organic waste from your establishment to ensure compliance with the statute.

Compliance and Enforcement

VAAFM is charged with administration and enforcement of the provisions of this chapter, and is authorized to adopt and enforce all rules and regulations it deems necessary to carry out the purposes of this chapter. At the time of this writing, the Agency has not adopted rules on this practice; as a result, all guidance language may be found in the applicable portions of 6 V.S.A. VAAFM is authorized to cooperate with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), which has compliance and enforcement responsibilities for this practice due to the Swine Health Protection Act. In all instances, USDA enforcement parallels state statute so there is variability in allowed practices between states.

For more information or if you have questions, please call the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets at (802) 828-2421.

Statutory References

Title 6 Chapter 113 Feeding Prohibited Food Waste to Swine

§ 1671. Definition

For the purpose of this chapter, "prohibited food waste" means all waste material derived in whole or in part from the meat of any animal (including fish and poultry) or other animal material, other than processed dairy products, and other refuse of any character whatsoever that has been associated with any such material, resulting from the handling, preparation, cooking, disposal, or consumption of food, except that such term shall not include waste from ordinary household operations which is fed directly to swine raised exclusively for the use in the household of the owner of the swine by members of the household and nonpaying guests and employees. (Amended 2003, No. 37, § 4.)

§ 1672. Feeding of prohibited food waste

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No person shall feed prohibited food waste to swine or supply prohibited food waste to others for the purpose of feeding it to swine. (Amended 1989, No. 256 (Adj. Sess.), § 10(a), eff. Jan. 1, 1991; 2003, No. 37, § 4.)

§ 1675. Inspection and investigation; records

Any authorized representative of the Vermont agency of agriculture, food and markets or United States Department of Agriculture is authorized to enter at reasonable times upon any private or public property for the purpose of inspecting and investigating the feeding of prohibited food waste to swine. (Amended 1989, No. 256 (Adj. Sess.), § 10(a), eff. Jan. 1, 1991; 2003, No. 37, § 4; No. 42, § 2, eff. May 27, 2003.)

§ 1677. Penalties

A person who violates any of the provisions of, or who fails to perform any duty imposed by this chapter, or who violates any rule or regulation adopted hereunder shall be fined not less than \$10.00 nor more than \$100.00 for each offense. Each day upon which such violation occurs constitutes a separate offense. In addition thereto, such person may be enjoined from further violation. The secretary may also seek administrative penalties under section 15 of this title for violations of this chapter. (Amended 2003, No. 37, § 4; No. 42, § 2, eff. May 27, 2003.)