

O₂C ~ Featured Facility

Southern California Equestrian Directory – October 15th 2010

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O₂C | ompost Compost Systems & Training

Horse Manure Composting – Turning Manure into Profit

Horse owners face a daunting challenge when it comes to manure management. Regardless of the breed of horse or riding discipline, the volume of manure and used bedding produced at every horse farm can become overwhelming in a short time. Often, without proper management techniques, this results in offensive odors, flies, mud, dust, and an unsightly mess – or large expenses in removal fees, neighborhood complaints and county regulation problems.

There are three manure management options widely known: 1) off-site disposal, which can be time consuming and very expensive; 2) direct application of raw manure to pastures, which cycles parasites and weeds into the ground; thus affecting horse health, degrading surface and ground water resources, and adversely impacting aquatic life; and 3) piling the manure (i.e. Composting). With ground water resources and community welfare at stake, it is easy to understand why regulators are beginning to take corrective action against the entire equine community.



Here's some good news! Composting converts raw horse manure into a clean, high-value product that can be effectively used around the farm or sold for profit. The key is to make the composting process systematic; to eliminate pile turning and thereby save time and money. In the old days, composting was accomplished using the PhD Method (Piled Higher and Deeper). This was often a 1- to 2-year process and did little to protect surface and ground water

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resources or eliminate weed seeds in the “final product”. Today, most people think that composting involves turning piles to fluff the material and reintroduce oxygen into the core.

What ranchers don't realize is that the infused oxygen is consumed by the micro-organisms within 30 to 45 minutes, so despite their pile turning efforts, the compost pile is still anaerobic (not breaking down). In reality, horse owners who use this method of composting mostly “intend” to turn the pile but this seldom actually takes place once the “fun” of composting has waned.

O2Compost has developed a bin-based, proven manure management system which features aerated composting. With aerated composting, fresh air (i.e., oxygen) is introduced throughout the mix of materials using an electric blower. A timer operates the blower and is set to cycle on and off 24-hours a day and 7-days a week. Within 21-30 days, the primary phase of composting (i.e., the Active Phase) is nearly complete. As with wine, compost gets better with age. Following the Active Phase, the material



as “Curing.” It is during the Curing Phase that most of the textural change to the mix occurs; yielding a uniform, dark soil-like product that smells nice and has “magical qualities,” according to avid gardeners. So, aeration greatly expedites the composting process, eliminating the “2-year pile syndrome.” Again, all of this takes place without having to turn the compost pile.

The O₂Compost systems are custom designed for any size horse operation – from the backyard horse owner with 2 horses, to the commercial equestrian facility with 200 horses. A recent study conducted by the American Horse Council estimates there to be 9.2 million horses in the United States. The volume of manure from this many horses would fill up the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California nearly 22 times per month or 264 times each year! However, the volume of manure and waste bedding isn't the real problem – proper manure management is! That's where O₂Compost comes in to offer both the



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product and the training to implement an effective, simple and affordable manure management program.

O₂Compost Systems typically include three or more bins, to accommodate farms with different land conditions (sloping or flat ground). They also offer free standing systems for open piles or block bays for farms with 20-200 horses. The systems are constructed from a variety of materials, typically with roof covers, and provisions for extreme cold/arid conditions are also incorporated into the designs. O₂Compost has even “gone greener,” with developing a solar powered option. Remote ranchers can compost “off the grid” by using the solar option, yet solar powered composting is suitable for virtually all scales of equestrian operations.

O₂Compost believes all horse owners, ranch managers and commercial equine facility professionals must take responsibility to properly manage the

manure and waste bedding that is generated on our farms in order to protect water resources and the health of horses. By adopting the aerated composting systems now available through O₂Compost, complete with installation, training and education for effective operation, the horse enthusiast can make a positive impact on our environment. It's no secret how to manage manure...the secret is aeration! Visit the O₂Compost website at www.o2compost.com and find out how to start aerated composting on your equine facility, ranch or backyard!

(360) 568-8085 Email: info@o2compost.com. Go to the Contact Us Page on the website to complete a small questionnaire about your unique situation - O₂Compost will review your comments and contact you with advice, resources and a manure management plan!

