

From [VOF Organic Standards](#) (p. 3, 4)

Use of Manure (205.203)

Animal manure can be one of the most valuable substances for organic food production. Many of the beneficial effects of manure, however, can be wasted by improper management. In addition to stabilizing nutrients to avoid leaching loss and enhance long-term soil fertility, composting manure is recommended because it promotes the decomposition of possible contaminants such as antibiotic residues and pesticides. It is also an effective means of reducing the population of pathogens that may cause plant, animal or human illness. Given the increasing public concern about food safety, every effort should be made to assure that uncomposted manure does not come in contact with edible plant parts during the growing season, during harvest or during post-harvest handling.

Application rates of manure, raw or composted should be based on soil test recommendations, ideally in combination with a manure or compost analysis. The primary aim should be to meet but not exceed the nitrogen needs of the crop.

For crops for human consumption, animal manure must be incorporated into the soil at least 120 days before harvesting a crop whose edible portion has direct contact with the soil (eg. lettuce, carrots) or at least 90 days before harvesting a crop whose edible portion does not have direct contact with the soil (eg. corn, apples). Manure from off-farm sources is acceptable provided it does not pose a risk of contaminating the organic crop with a prohibited material.

Please note that aged manure (no matter how old) must be treated as raw manure unless there is documentation that demonstrates it has met the specific guidelines for compost outlined below.

Use of Compost (205.203)

The producer must manage plant and animal materials to maintain or improve soil organic matter content in a manner that does not contribute to contamination of crops, soil, or water by plant nutrients, pathogenic organisms, heavy metals, or residues of prohibited substances. There are no specific regulations for composting when feedstock is made up of only plant materials.

Compost that contains manure must meet the specific guidelines as described by the NOSB Compost Task Force Recommendation as follows, "Compost is acceptable if made from only allowed feedstock materials, the compost undergoes an increase in temperature to at least 131 °F and remains there for a minimum of 3 days, and the compost pile is mixed or managed to ensure that all of the feedstock heats to the minimum temperature," or as by the NOP Rule Section 205.203(c)(2)(ii), maintain a temperature of between 131F and 170F for 3 days using an in-vessel or static aerated pile system.

Static aerated piles do not have to be turned. Compost piles must have an intentional aeration technique, such as perforated pipes connected to blowers, to qualify as 'static, aerated'.

Compost which meets the above guidelines can be applied at any time. Sufficient records must be kept to show that these guidelines were met (including temperatures and dates turned). If it cannot be verified that the compost containing manure has reached the required temperature, then the compost must be treated as raw manure and the regulations on the number of days between application and harvest must be met. Compost tea must be prepared from compost that meets the above guidelines or else it must be applied according to the manure guidelines.