

How often to pump your septic tank

Your septic tank must be cleaned or "pumped" periodically to remove the solids that accumulate in the tank. How often you need to clean your septic tank depends on its size and how careful you are about using it.

In new homes, clean it prior to occupation. Clean it again, within six to twelve months, to make sure it is functioning properly. Wastewater from painting, varnishing and other construction activities can reduce bacterial activity in new systems.

Once a system is operating properly, the tank should be cleaned every one to two years. It is best not to go more than three years between cleanings.

Proper cleaning removes the scum and sludge. Liquid contents are pumped back and forth from the truck to the tank until all solids are liquefied and removed. If floating scum is left in the tank, solids may enter the drainfield. Cleaning leaves a black film on the sides of the tank and a small amount of

liquid on the bottom. These contain bacteria which allow the tank to begin working again. There is no need to add a starter after cleaning.

The contractor should inspect the tank to make sure baffles are in place and functioning properly. Contractors cleaning the tank through four or six "inspection pipes" often do not remove all solids and may damage baffles. Insist that your contractor clean the tank through

the manhole. Most tanks have one or two manholes that are often buried below the ground surface. A little digging may be necessary to find them.

Remember, a few dollars spent every one or two years on proper cleaning can save you big dollars on repairs, which can run an unexpected \$2,000 to \$10,000.

Estimated septic tank pumping frequencies in years (for year-round occupancy).(DJ)

Tank size (gal)	Household size (number of people)				
	1	2	3	4	5
750	9	4	3	2	1
1000	12	6	4	3	2
1250	16	8	5	3	3
1500	19	9	6	4	3
1750	22	11	7	5	4

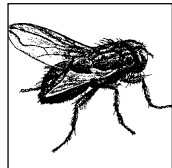
Note: More frequent pumping needed if garbage disposal is used.

Flies

Most species of flies have a general type of life cycle that includes: egg, larva, pupa and adult, with the latter being the animal parasitic stage. A few, such as bots, are specialized parasites, with the larva being the parasitic stage.

Stable and house flies are the most common insect pests of all livestock, including horses. Animal waste management is vital to any successful fly control program. Both species of flies lay their eggs and develop as larvae in decaying organic matter such as spilled hay or bedding straw mixed with urine and manure. Wet, decomposing organic matter creates ideal breeding conditions for both fly species.

on the front legs, and feeds on blood. The fly bites inflict pain to the animal which responds by foot stamping and tail switching in an effort to dislodge the fly.



House fly

House flies have a sponging type mouthpart and feed only on secretions of the animal around

the eyes, nostrils and anal openings. They are annoying to the animal even though they don't bite.

Control of the house and stable fly can be achieved by several methods, but the first step is to remove or reduce fly breeding areas. Bedding and manure should be removed at least weekly.

This waste material can be spread on fields or in pens, but must be spread thin enough to dry quickly. If it is stored for future spreading, it must be packed in steep-sloped piles that do not allow penetration of moisture, or covered with black plastic that creates enough heat to kill developing fly larvae.

Insecticides may be applied as residual or area sprays, or as animal treatments. The residual

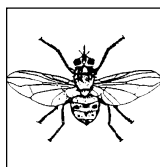
sprays are applied to fly resting areas.

Stable flies rest in shady areas such as fences, bunks, and the sides of buildings. House flies rest ("roost") at night inside of buildings on the ceiling, walls, or under eaves. Residual sprays should remain effective for seven to ten days if not washed off by rain or exposed to direct sunlight.

Caution

Use only insecticides that are USDA approved and EPA registered for use on horses. Wettable powder (WP) formulations are generally preferred over emulsifiable-concentrates (EC) because horses are sensitive to skin burns from solvent carriers in some EC formulations.

Always read and follow the label directions and observe treatment restrictions, such as minimum age of animal to be treated, or warnings concerning treatment of sick animals, or treatment in conjunction with other medications. Lists of approved insecticides for use on horses are provided in EC 1550, Nebraska Management Guide for Control of Arthropod Pests of Livestock and Horses. (DJ)



Stable fly

The house fly and stable fly are similar in size, appearance, and life cycle, except the house fly completes its life cycle in about

two weeks in the summer, as opposed to three weeks for the stable fly.

The stable fly has piercing, sucking mouthparts with which it penetrates the skin, primarily

Acreage Insights



Caring for animals when gone

Livestock are a very serious responsibility. They are dependent upon you for their care. When you are gone for any extended period of time they must still be cared for on a regular basis. Even in the age of automatic feeders and waterers your animals should be looked in on daily to insure that they are in good health. Feeders and waterers can break and daily proper nutrition is very important to the overall health of the animal. When you are away, you should get a reliable person that you can trust and who is familiar with the care of livestock to look in on your animals. This will not only ensure that your animals are getting the proper nutrition they require and are in good health, but it will also enable you to relax and not worry while you are gone.

You should also provide your "animal sitter" with the proper numbers (i.e. police, fire, local veterinarian) in case of an emergency along with a detailed description of what needs to be fed and other chores to be done, if necessary. It would be a good idea to give your sitter the number where you can be reached, if you need to be notified. Remember, that your animals are still dependent on you for food, shelter and health care even though you are away. Providing them with a reliable sitter will ensure they will be just as healthy when you return as when you left them. (DJ)

Field Day features high-value crops

If you own a small farm or acreage, or if you dream of owning one someday, then don't miss the third annual Specialty Crops Field Day. Featuring tours of nearby farms and acreages, this popular event will highlight the production and marketing of high-value specialty crops and livestock which can be successfully raised on a few acres, and even in your own backyard.

Scheduled for Saturday, August 15, this field day will begin at the Haymarket Farmer's Market at noon with a brief overview of the market. Maps and information will be available at the market manager's booth all morning. Come to the Farmer's Market early to shop and enjoy the music of the Plain Label String Band.

The tour group will meet at the Lancaster County Extension Office, 444 Cherrycreek Road, at 12:30 for lunch and a presentation on community gardening. A delicious array of locally-grown salads, fruit, sweet corn and home-baked bread will be served. Please bring your own sandwiches and drinks.

The Specialty Crops Field Day is co-sponsored by the Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society, the Haymarket Farmer's Market, Lancaster County Cooperative Extension, the UNL Center for Sustainable Agriculture Systems, the Organic Crop Improvement Association Nebraska Chapter #3 and County Edge. (DJ)

Buildings

Selecting a building that is right for your farm livestock should include meeting all your personal needs in addition to your livestock's needs. This should all be done at a minimal cost to the farm enterprise. Providing adequate housing for your animals, including proper ventilation and space, is essential and will ensure that they are getting the housing they need to remain healthy and productive.

There are several factors you must consider when choosing the building that is right for you. First, you must consider what you intend to use the building for, whether it be a farrowing barn or a stable to keep a few horses. The animal species will greatly affect the number of animals you can house in the facility. Each animal should have an adequate amount of resting space to make sure it is comfortable, an adequate amount of feed access, and free access to clean, fresh water. Ventilation and air quality are critical when planning livestock housing. Many facilities may require ventilation fans to move an adequate amount of air within the facility. It is very critical that you do not overlook the ventilation factor as animals residing in a poorly ventilated area will be at greater risk of sickness and disease.

Special architectural requirements for the building, such as wider doors to get large equipment through, should also be considered for your livestock building. Determine how you will clean livestock waste from the facility before it is built. Finally, when you are selecting a building, you must decide where you want to locate it and if you are planning any major farm site renovations in the next few years. This could make a big impact on any future projects you have planned. (DJ)



Festival of Color

On September 12, join many other acreage owners at the Festival of Color at the ARDC Horticulture area near Mead, NE. This has been a popular educational festival for home gardeners for several years. Emphasis this year is on water conservation and quality through lawn and garden practices. Educational talks, demonstrations plus commercial exhibitors will highlight the '98 festival. (DJ)