

NOVEMBER 6, 1997

In November of 1996, an experiment was initiated at the Rochester Unit in the Winamac Subdistrict. INDOT has been experiencing problems in finding an appropriate disposal method for dead animals found on the right-of-way. The main method in the past for dealing with this problem was burial. This sometimes resulted in unsatisfactory results, required significant employee time, and on occasion resulted in bad public relations. Two methods were decided upon to try to permanently solve this problem. The two methods being tried are the use of decomposition units and the use of gas / diesel crematoria. The methods are being compared to determine the best solution.

The Winamac Subdistrict, located on U.S.-31 and State Road 14, was chosen as the site of the experimental decomposition units. The units were installed in November, 1996. By the spring of 1997, the Subdistrict started utilizing the units. As of this date over 100 animals are in the process of decomposition in the unit. It takes about six months from the time the animals are put in the process until a compost is produced that is ready for use.

This alternative has resulted in several positive benefits-it requires less employee man-hours than the former disposal methods. In the past the employees were required to spend time digging a burial pit after a day of litter collection. Now, all that is required is that the employees unload the carcasses at the units, a loader places the carcasses in the unit and they are covered with saw dust. After 90 days, the area is ready for turning. The material is placed on a pad, and recovered with saw dust for another 90 days. At the end of this period, the compost is ready for use wherever INDOT might need it.

Labor is cut to about one quarter of the man-hours needed previously. The decomposition units initially cost around \$10,000 and will be usable for many, many years. Saw dust can be supplied by INDOT's brush cutting / chipping operations, or purchased for a minor amount of money.

This solution is not only environmentally friendly and odor-free, but saves the Indiana taxpayer significant amounts of Monies. The resulting compost is of good quality, and could be made available to the public or to other Indiana agencies (such as IDNR) for use. The compost when properly processed is compatible to a fertilizer content of 20-4-2.

The use of a crematory is just being initiated. Cost of construction, operation, and man-hours will be compared with the compost units to determine which alternative is the most cost effective, non-offensive to neighbors and efficient solution.

