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Book Review of Amer El-Ahraf & William V. Willis, Management of Animal Waste - Environmental Health Problems and Technological Solutions

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Book Review of Amer El-Ahraf & William V. Willis, Management of Animal Waste - Environmental Health Problems and Technological Solutions

Erratum

The citation for this review is *8 RISK 91 (1997)* in most commercial databases.

Amer El-Ahraf & William V. Willis, *Management of Animal Waste — Environmental Health Problems and Technological Solutions* (Praeger Publishers 1996). About the authors, bibliography, index, introduction, tables. LC 95-654; ISBN 0-275-93529-9 [185 pp. Cloth \$65.00. 88 Post Road West, Westport CT 06881.]

This book is designed to help make informed policy decisions about the ever-increasing problem of animal waste disposal. It also offers advice in the selection (based on an individual's needs and type of waste involved) of practical methods for getting rid of animal wastes. Its intended audience is said to include:¹

students, faculty, and researchers in the schools of agriculture, engineering, veterinary medicine, and public health; environmental control and public health agencies, agricultural inspectors; planners and legislative staff... farmers, entrepreneurs, Farm Bureau advisors, environmental and consumer groups, and legislators....

Unfortunately, many members of this broad audience will have difficulty comprehending much of the book or making decisions based upon its content. As a person who grew up on a farm raising beef cattle and hogs, whose family is still involved in crop farming, I found the chemical reactions and technical references daunting.

Also, if one has difficulty with acronyms, this book will pose a challenge. From the start, once terms were used, many were thereafter referred to by acronym — for example CZARA (Coastal Zone Act Reauthorization Amendment); BMP (Best Management Practices), BOD (Biological Oxygen Demand); TS, VS and VSS (total, volatile and volatile suspended solids); COD (chemical oxygen demand); TKN (total Kjeldhal nitrogen) and NPDES (National Pollution Discharge Emission Standards). A glossary would have been helpful.

Another problem is that the authors list measured levels of chemicals in relation to water quality but do not interpret them. I could not find "acceptable" levels for listed chemicals; hence raw numbers had little meaning. Although the authors state that certain measured levels are unacceptable per named standards, the reader is not told how far out of line various levels are. The book could have been improved by selective inclusion of such information.

¹ At *xiv*.

Notwithstanding these shortcomings, *Management of Animal Waste* provides a comprehensive view of choices available to confront problems that show no sign of diminishing. Its bibliography is broad and includes sources that pointedly disagree with the authors. Overall, the book provides a useful comparative overview of available choices for addressing animal waste disposal.

However, in approaching this work, the authors should have considerably reduced the scope of its intended audience or given more effort to meeting needs of those without technical educations and extensive regulatory experience.

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