



National Agricultural Research Institute

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Animal Manure for your garden



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ANIMAL MANURE

Animal manure is the faeces or dung and the urine from farm animals, maybe mixed with litter or bedding.

It is an excellent fertiliser for food crops.

Animal manure comes in several possible forms –

- | Dry pellets from underneath sheep or goat night houses or rabbit cages, or collected from the floor.
- | Chicken droppings from underneath layer cages.
- | Chicken or rabbit house deep litter-droppings or pellets mixed with coffee hulls, rice husks or sawdust.
- | Pig dung collected from the floor or ground.
- | Washings from pig pens that are cleaned using water.

Normally for a good crop use-

- 1-2 kg per square metre of dry pellets or fresh pig manure
- 2-4 kg per square metre of poultry or rabbit litter
- 500g per square metre of fresh poultry droppings.
- A small, standard size (8 litre) bucket will hold 2 kg of dry pellets or litter or 4 kg of wet poultry droppings.
- A 2 litre ice-cream container will hold 500g of dry pellets or litter or 1 kg of wet poultry droppings.

How to use it –

- | Dig the manure into the top 10-20 cm (one hand depth) of the soil before planting, or dig in around each planting site, established plant or tree.
- | Poultry or rabbit litter should be dug into the soil about two weeks before planting to allow time for the litter to break down.
- | Do not put fresh manure directly on the plants as it may kill them.
- | On most soils, as little as 200g per square metre before each crop will help maintain soil fertility if starting from a long bush fallow and the different types of crop are moved around the garden with each planting – not continuous cropping with a staple crop.

| Cattle dung collected from yards or around water troughs.

The value of the manure as a fertiliser will vary with the form of the material but all forms are useful.

Picture 1: Shows result of rabbit manure used as fertilizer on a cabbage.



Animals will also fertilise gardens when –

- | Pigs, sheep or goats are put into gardens between harvest and the planting of the next crop.
- | Pigs are tethered on sweet potato mounds after harvest.

Picture 2: Shows goat manure applied to taro.



- | Animals are enclosed on the garden site every night for one month or more before planting, one adult pig, sheep or goat per square metre.

Animal manure –

- | Adds the same plant nutrients to the soil as can be obtained from fertiliser bought from the store (nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium).
- | Adds organic matter which improves air and water movement through the soil and soil moisture holding capacity.
- | Improves the soil health by increasing the diversity of soil micro-organisms and numbers of earthworms.