A Basic Summary of

The National Organic Program
Manure and Manure-Compost Regulations

Manure is a traditional fertilizer for farms and gardens. It is an excellent and locally available resource. Unfortunately, it often contains human pathogens. Some, like E. coli *0157 and salmonella, can be fatal. The National Organic Standard regulates how manure is used in organic production to prevent microbial contamination of produce.*

Summary requirements for manure use: [§205.203(c)]

- If you apply manure within 120 days of the harvest of vegetable crops, it MUST be thoroughly composted using a high temperature process (131°–170° F. for up to 15 days). Thorough composting means that adequate mixing and turning of the pile is also done. [§205.203(c)(1)(ii)]
- You *may* apply uncomposted manure within 90 days of harvest to those few vegetables, like sweet corn, whose edible portion does not touch the ground or receive ground splash. [§205.203(c)(1)(iii)]
- Commercial heat-treated manure products have the same unrestricted use as high temperature compost (according to a policy memo published by the NOP on July 19, 2007).
- Applications of worm-composted manure and other animal materials MUST comply with the 120- and 90-day rules, unless high temperature composting or other heat treatments have also been used as described above (according to NOP Guidance 5021, July 2011).
- Dried manure and guano have the same restrictions as uncomposted manure.
- Manure tea and compost tea – even if made from high temperature compost – have the same restrictions as uncomposted manure.
- None of these restrictions apply to compost applications to non-food plants or to compost that does not contain manure.