

Each year the Treasure Valley area of southwestern Idaho and southeastern Oregon produces roughly 500,000 tons of onions. Processing and sorting such a huge volume of onions always results in some amount of culls, unmarketables, rotten product, and debris to be disposed of.

Cull onions and debris may only be disposed of in certain ways so as to prevent the onion maggot from spreading potentially devastating disease in the heart of our production area. In Idaho, the disposal of cull onions is regulated by IDAPA 02.06.17, Rules Governing the Disposal of Cull Onions and Potatoes. The regulated area of Idaho for cull onion disposal is the entirety of Ada, Canyon, Gem, Payette, and Washington Counties. This rule also applies to any waste bulbs or debris associated with onion seed production.

All culls and debris must be disposed of by March 15th of each year. This means that there must be no culls on hand at any packing sheds, infields, or at animal feed facilities on the morning of that date. Cull onions not properly disposed of on March 16th of each year are in violation of the rule and the landowner or responsible person is subject to legal action including a monetary fine.



Onion Maggot

NOTIFICATION REQUIRED:

In addition to proper disposal methods and timing, Idaho's Rule also requires **written notification of both the person receiving the onions and also the landowner** of the property where they are being disposed of. The written notification must inform the recipient of the Rule and also the recipient's responsibilities under the Rule. Failure to make this written notification is a violation of the rule, and is subject to the same penalty actions as improper disposal.

PENALTIES:

Failure to comply with the Rule may result in a civil penalty of up to \$10,000 per incident.

SUMMARY:

Proper disposal of cull onions is a critical defense against potentially devastating disease for our industry. With everyone's cooperation we can maintain the top quality of the Treasure Valley's onion industry for the future.

CONTACT:

To report cull piles or improperly disposed onions please call the Idaho State Department of Agriculture.

Division of Plant Industries
2270 Old Penitentiary Rd.
Boise, Idaho 83712

(208) 332-8620

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Idaho State Department of Agriculture

Cull Onion Disposal in Idaho





Pushed over the cliff is not acceptable



Unburied culls rotting; unacceptable



Too thick to be plowed



No piling!



Spread out well, but needs to be buried

DISPOSAL:

1) Disposal by Covering in Dumps or Pits.

Culls disposed of in this manner must be managed and covered as recommended by the University of Idaho Agricultural Extension Service. Among other things recommended by them, the **pits must be capped** with a "hat" in order to cause water to run off of the pit instead of collecting over it. This cap must be maintained even as the culls in the pit decompose and the pit sinks.



Uncapped, Sunken Pit



Proper pit to be covered

2) Disposal by Feeding.

Sheep or goats shall be fed no more than fifty-three (53) pounds of cull onions per individual animal per day. Cull onions shall be fed from either bunks or by spreading throughout the pasture or feedlot. Cull onions shall not be fed from piles. Cattle shall be fed a ration containing no more than twenty-five percent (25%) cull onions on a dry matter basis. Onion debris shall be completely removed from feeding areas and buried under twelve (12) inches or more of onion-free soil by March 15th of each year. In the case of residues of onion debris two (2) inches or less in depth, or onions tramped into the soil so that they cannot be removed, such areas shall be disked and plowed as deep as possible, **AND** such that all onions and debris are buried under eight (8) inches or more of onion-free soil by March 15th of each year. Cattle and sheep being finished for market or dairy cattle shall not be fed forage or grains grown on feeding areas where culls have been disposed of under the Rule.

3) Disposal by Composting. Cull onions being composted shall be covered by twelve (12) inches or more of onion-free soil or composting material until the onions have turned to compost.

4) Disposal of Residue in Onion Producing Fields.

Commercial onion fields where sort-out bulbs are left at harvest shall be disked and plowed as deep as possible, **AND** such that all onions and debris are buried under eight (8) inches or more of onion-free soil by March 15th of each year. Following final seed harvest, seed bulbs shall be disked and plowed as deep as possible, **AND** such that all onions and debris are buried under eight (8) inches or more of onion-free soil by March 15th of each year.

5) Disposal by Chopping or Shredding.

Cull onions that have been chopped or shredded to the point that they are incapable of sprouting, shall be disked and plowed as deep as possible, **AND** such that all onions and debris are buried under eight (8) inches or more of onion-free soil by March 15th of each year.

6) Disposal by Spreading.

Cull Onions may be disposed of by being spread on agricultural fields destined to be planted to a crop other than onions provided the onions are disked and plowed as deep as possible, **AND** such that all onions and debris are buried under eight (8) inches or more of onion-free soil.

7) Inclement Weather.

If inclement weather prevents disposal by the methods listed in the Rule, culls must be treated with an EPA-labeled insecticide at prescribed intervals as recommended by the University of Idaho Agricultural Extension Service until proper disposal can be carried out.

For onions that are sorted after March 15th of each year, resulting culls **must be disposed of within one (1) week or every seven days.** They can be disposed of according to any of the above methods, but must be disposed of within a week regardless of the method employed.