

Book Review for student project
Dan Kaufman
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HOLY SHIT: MANAGING MANURE TO SAVE MANKIND

Gene Logsdon
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I believe Sim Van der Ryn, author of *The Toilet Papers*, may have summed this book up best when he said, "This is the book to read if you give a crap about crap." To state that this book is the definitive guide to all things manure would be somewhat of an understatement.

Logsdon breaks down the manure of pretty much any animal you may come in to contact with by chapter. One chapter for poultry, one for cattle, one for goats, etc... Each chapter estimates the number of that particular animal in the U.S., how much manure each animal produces annually and extrapolates an estimate of the amount of compostable manure that could be produced for soil fertilization *and* the approximate cost or savings to the average farmer, the environment, and fertilizer market. Of course, the impact to the soil health overall is incalculable, but Logsdon attempts to paint a picture of how this manure can be used.

For example: The estimated number of horses in the U.S. is around 9.5 million. Each 1,000-pound horse produces roughly 20 tons of manure annually (including stall bedding). Assuming these numbers are accurate, that totals out to approximately 190,000,000 TONS of manure annually. Experts agree that 10 tons of manure will fertilize 1 acre of land without adding any other fertilizer. That means that every year, American horses alone produce enough fertilizer for 19 MILLION acres. Assuming an average price of \$100 an acre now spent on fertilizer, just using horse manure would be worth \$1.9 billion.

Logsdon also spends a sizeable portion of the book tackling the issues of humane manure. If Joseph Jenkins' *The Humanure Handbook* is considered the bible of human waste management, *Holy Shit...* is the New Testament. Various problems with human waste

management are explored at great lengths- from safety to uses and proper composting techniques. The topic of human manure in this book provides my only negative comment: the author tends to get more than just a little political from time-to-time. Although his passion is admirable (and I happen to agree with all of his opinions), it does tend to detract from the over-all impact of the book.

Politics aside, this book was a fantastic read and ended up dog-eared and highlighted on my nightstand- where it will likely stay for quite a while. Not only is it the most informative volume I've encountered on the topic of manure, but it is written with Logsdon's trademark humor and anecdotal style that have made his writings so popular as a contributing author of *BioCycle* magazine and over 30 books and articles. Overall, I'd give it 5 stars out of 5.