HydroCremations at the Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine

Individual and group HydroCremations are performed at the College of Veterinary Medicine using the alkaline hydrolysis process, a proven water-based alternative that yields the same dry, powdered mineral ash as cremations by incineration with only a tenth of the energy use and associated environmental impact.

For individual HydroCremations, each animal is carefully identified and tracked before, during, and after the HydroCremation process using a combination of authorization forms, individual tracking tags, and unique identification numbers to ensure the highest degree of accuracy possible. The animals are separately contained in specially-designed vessels during the HydroCremation process and we provide a Certificate of HydroCremation with ashes from each individual HydroCremation.

FAQs

- I've heard the process involves dangerous chemicals, is this true? The Hydro-Cremation process uses a combination of water, steam and lye. While it is very caustic, lye is one of the basic ingredients traditionally used to make soap.
- Are the ashes clean? Yes, in addition to being sterile, the HydroCremated remains are triple-rinsed to remove any residual lye.
- What about the liquid generated by the process? The liquid “hydrolysate” is trucked to a treatment facility in Ithaca where it is used to produce biogas, which is then used to generate electricity and heat for the treatment facility, thus reducing the region’s dependence on fossil fuels.
- What size animals can be HydroCremated? We have successfully HydroCremated animals as small as lizards and parakeets, and as large as draft horses and bulls.
- How long does it take for ashes to be ready for return? HydroCremations are performed at least once per week on Thursdays and more frequently based on demand. Ashes from individual hydrocremations received by Thursday morning are typically ready for pickup or shipping on the following Tuesday (large animals may require additional time). Additional time is required for necropsies to be performed when they are requested.
- Where can I learn more? See [http://www.vet.cornell.edu/college/bioSafety/cremations.htm](http://www.vet.cornell.edu/college/bioSafety/cremations.htm) or contact Paul Jennette at 607/253-4227 or [jpj22@cornell.edu](mailto:jpj22@cornell.edu).