



# CONSERVATION *Showcase*

## **NRCS Provides Solution to Manure Storage for Organic Chicken Farmer**

**York County, PA  
August 2013**

In 2011, Dave Reifsneider approached NRCS looking at a better solution to handle the manure from his four chicken houses. Dave recently switched to raising organic chickens from turkeys.

Approximately every ten weeks, when the new flocks are introduced, each house needs to be cleaned out. Historically, Dave's only method of handling the manure was to haul it to an area and hope the timing was right for neighboring farmers to spread the manure on their fields. This often resulted in the manure pile sitting for long periods of time. According to Dave, even if the manure could be hauled from his site, sometimes the conditions or timing wasn't right and it would often need to be stockpiled in the fields before spreading.

Working with the York County NRCS office, Dave and the engineers decided to build a 40 X 104' roofed stacking area with 6-foot walls. This would allow him to store enough manure for two clean outs of his four broiler houses, and get him through the winter months where storage would need to be the longest. The township also required Dave to install an infiltration system from the collected roof runoff water. The water runs from the downspouts in to a stone trench. To date, the system has been tested with several 4" rains and seems to be working well. The construction of the building was completed by December of 2012.

Dave is extremely pleased with how the building turned out. His only comment is "we should have gone a little bit bigger," with a chuckle. At the time of layout, he thought the building looked too big. As the pictures show, we didn't leave much wiggle room. The stacking area has already allowed Dave to use the existing manure piles to compost his mortalities. Dave says the birds are completely composted within three to four weeks. Management of mortalities has been much easier than using his old compost shed because adding additional birds to the pile is a lot easier than messing around with slimy board like he had to before.

By Eric Samus and Tara Lauer



Dave Reifsneider's roofed stacking area. Note the overflow on the downspouts in case the infiltration trench "backs up".



Inside the roofed stacking area with about half of the manure hauled away (approximately 290 Tons).