

Landowner _____

Handling Catastrophic Poultry Losses (Non-burial Methods)

DEALING WITH CATASTROPHIC LOSSES

Mortality is a normal part of poultry operations. Normal mortality should be addressed with composters or other appropriate carcass disposal methods. This job sheet addresses dealing with catastrophic poultry losses. For assistance in dealing with normal mortality, contact your local NRCS or Conservation District office.

BEFORE DISPOSAL BEGINS

Proper disposal of carcasses is important to prevent livestock disease transmission and to protect air and water quality. The Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry (ODAFF) requires licensed confined animal feeding operations (CAFO's) and registered poultry feeding operations to have plans for handling losses of normal mortality and catastrophic losses.

METHODS OF DISPOSAL

There are various methods available for handling catastrophic poultry losses. This job sheet describes landfill, rendering, and field composting. Disposal by burial is not covered in this job sheet. Contact your local NRCS or Conservation District office to assist in finding out which disposal methods can be used on your farm.

Disposal by Landfill

Landfilling is a method of disposing of catastrophic losses that actually removes the carcasses from the farm and disposing of them at commercial facilities. Be sure to check with your local landfill before taking your carcasses to them. Not all landfills will accept dead poultry.

Poultry mortality is usually not considered as industrial waste, therefore no special permits are needed to dispose of carcasses in landfills.

Disposal by Rendering

Rendering is not a common method of disposal of catastrophic poultry losses, but may become more readily available in the future.

Rendering is a service provided by a commercial company that, for a fee, will dispose of your losses through the rendering process.

Disposal by Field Composting

Field composting consists of the same basic principles that are used in normal mortality composters. A mixture of straw, litter and birds are used to dispose of the carcasses in a manner that does not create odor, fly, or scavenger problems. High temperatures are created during the decomposition process which destroy pathogenic bacteria.

LOCATIONS OF FIELD COMPOST PILES

Locations for field composting must meet the following criteria:

- Do not locate the compost pile farther than 150 feet from the top of a slope unless overhead water is diverted away from the pile
- Do not locate the compost pile closer than 1 foot vertically above the flood plain or within 2 feet of water table or bedrock
- Do not locate the compost pile within 300 feet of wells, springs, streams, neighboring residences, or public areas
- Locate the compost pile as close as possible to natural windbreaks or other areas that protect the covering from blowing winds.

PROCEDURES FOR FIELD COMPOSTING

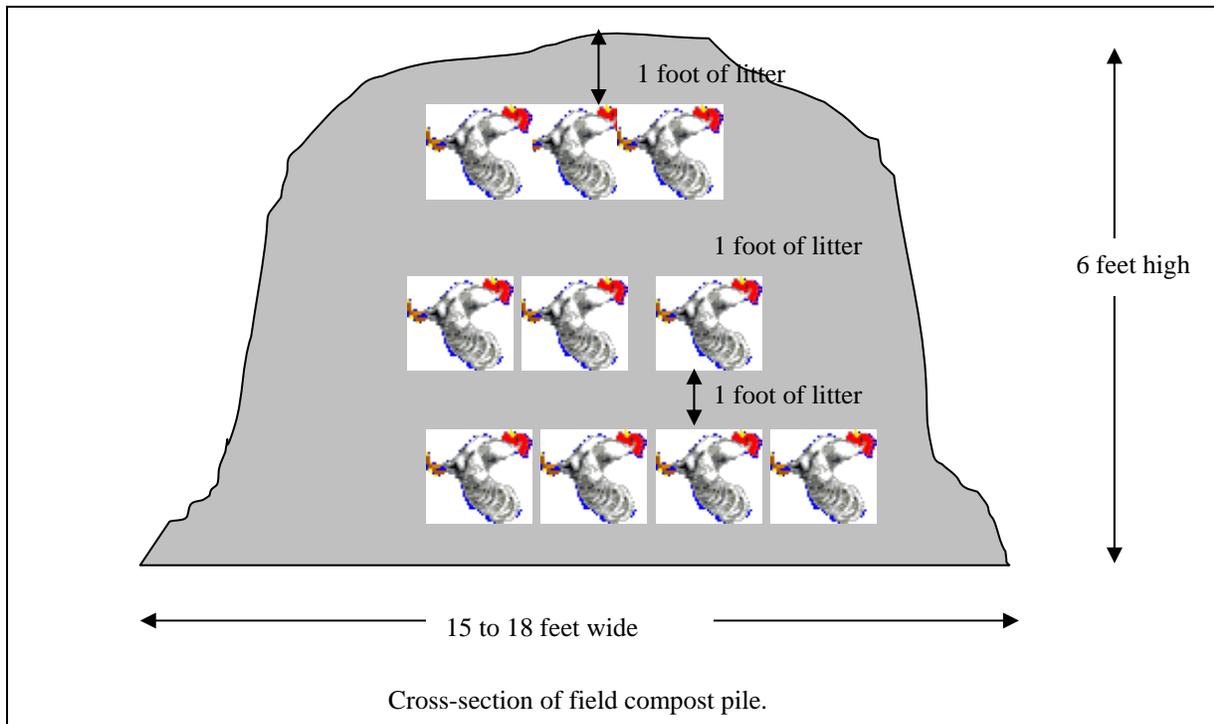
- Place 6 inches of straw or litter a width of 15 to 18 feet for a distance long enough to handle the number of birds which need disposal
- Place a layer of birds on top of this litter and cover with one foot of litter. Up to three layers may be used
- Cover the compost pile with a tarp.
- After 7 to 10 days, use a front end loader to turn the compost pile

- Allow two weeks after turning the pile before land applying the compost
- Apply the composted material evenly over land areas at a rate not to exceed two tons per acre.
- The site where the compost pile was located should be tilled and revegetated within three weeks following land application.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR FIELD COMPOSTING

Do not use the same location for subsequent field compost operations.

If carcasses are noticed to not be decomposing entirely, allow the compost pile to remain longer before land applying.



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