



## POULTRY WASTE MANAGEMENT

### Dead Bird Disposal

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All commercial poultry producers are required by Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Livestock Sanitary Board regulation (Lac 7:1171) to obtain a certificate of approval for disposal of dead poultry. Application for certificates may be obtained through the State Veterinarian's Office, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry. Certificates of approval are continuous, but subject to review and cancellation should the poultry producer fail to dispose of dead poultry in accordance with the regulations.

Three methods of dead bird disposal are approved for use in Louisiana\*:

1. **COMPOSTING**
2. **INCINERATION**
3. **RENDERING**

*COMPOSTING* - Composting is a controlled natural process in which beneficial microorganisms (bacteria and fungi) reduce and transform organic wastes into a useful end product. In dead bird composting units, a prescribed mixture of dead chickens, manure, straw or hay, and water are converted by microorganisms to compost. The design, construction and use of composting units must be approved by an authorized representation of the Livestock Sanitary Board. These units must meet or contain five basic criteria:

1. **Roof** - A roof ensures year round operation and controls rain water and percolation which can cause major problems.
2. **Foundation** - An impervious weight-bearing foundation such as concrete is critical to all-weather operation. A concrete foundation secures the composter against vermin and reduces contamination of the surrounding area.
3. **Building Materials** - Pressure treated lumber or other rot resistant materials should be used to extend the life of the facility.
4. **Composter Size** - Capacity of the composter must be sufficient to handle average mortality. The Soil Conservation Service recommends the following composting area based on total number of broiler placement capacity.

Number of Broilers	Total FT <sup>3</sup> (Primary + Secondary)
20,000	960
40,000	1440
60,000	1920
80,000	2400
100,000	2880
120,000	3360

5. **Thermometer** - Monitoring the composting temperatures is very important in good management of a composting unit. A 36" probe type thermometer is effective for monitoring temperature in typical composting bins.

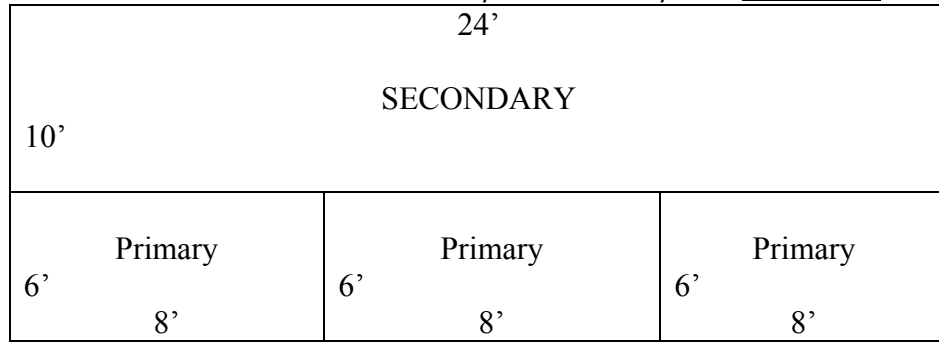
*INCINERATION* - Incineration may be the most sanitary method of dead bird disposal. Commercial units for incineration are available with oil or gas burners and are usually equipped with automatic timers. The Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry has capacity guidelines which are necessary for approval. Prior to placing an incinerator into operation a letter listing manufacturer, model number, fuel type, fuel use per hour and location should be sent to DEQ Air Quality Division, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Good management recommendations include the following:

1. Locate incinerators downwind from poultry houses and populated areas.
2. Remove ashes before each firing to assure proper performance, reduce maintenance and maximize incinerator life.
3. Protect unit from the weather when not in use (if mobile) or construct a simple open metal structure to extend its life.
4. Maintain a distance of at least four feet between smoke stacks and wooden structures or trees.

*RENDERING* - Dead poultry may be transported in covered containers to approved rendering plants. Storage methods, modes of transportation and location of rendering plant should be submitted and approved by an authorized representation of the livestock Sanitary Board. Researchers in Alabama have estimated cost of composting dead birds at 2.1 cents per pound, incineration cost at 4.3 cents per pound and rendering at 3.5 - 5.0 cents per pound. Estimated useful life of a composting unit is 10 - 15 years, while an incinerator is expected to last 5 - 7 years. Proper disposal of dead poultry in an environmentally safe manner is important, not only for the environment but for the life of the poultry industry as well.

\* (Disposal pits will no longer be approved after January 1, 1993. Pits currently in use may be approved to operate until January 1, 1995.)

*Example: Basic Composter Dimensions*



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