

Hurricane Irene – Storm Poultry Mortality Guidance

Updated 8/26/2011

In the event of large-scale destruction of poultry houses and the death of poultry due to storm-related conditions, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) offers the following guidance to poultry farmers in Maryland. This is a short-term guidance intended for mortalities that occur as direct result of Hurricane Irene only. This fact sheet is not a permit nor does it address all potential issues associated with the management of poultry mortalities or disaster debris. It is your responsibility to comply with all applicable environmental regulations and to prevent the pollution of the waters of the State.

Building debris:

- Debris from destroyed buildings should be disposed of at permitted landfills; some materials such as metal can be recycled.
- See MDE's website at http://www.mde.state.md.us/programs/Land/SolidWaste/PermittedFacilities/Pages/Programs/LandPrograms/Solid_Waste/facilities/index.aspx for a list of permitted facilities and contact persons.
- There is no specific limit on how long debris can stay on the site of origination before being disposed of but the debris must be managed within a reasonable time or it will be considered unpermitted disposal.
- Burial on-site is not a legal option except for materials that meet the definition of clean fill (e.g., clean concrete pads and footers). See COMAR 26.04.07.04C(5).

Animal carcasses:

- Mortalities can be disposed of at permitted municipal waste landfills. Contact the specific facility you intend to use for information concerning their acceptance procedures. See MDE's website at http://www.mde.state.md.us/programs/Land/SolidWaste/PermittedFacilities/Pages/Programs/LandPrograms/Solid_Waste/facilities/index.aspx for a list of permitted facilities and contact persons.
- Some commercial facilities may accept some carcasses. Contact facilities to determine their willingness to accept the material.
- Composting can be performed on-farm if it is done properly. In-house composting is preferred as this limits the potential for nuisances such as odors, attraction of disease vectors, and water pollution. All composting activities must be performed in accordance with your CAFO or MAFO permit, and with appropriate guidance (see below). CAFOs and MAFOs that are currently unregistered may also compost mortalities based on these guidelines.
- See MDE's composting fact sheet online at http://www.mde.state.md.us/programs/Land/SolidWaste/Pages/Programs/LandPrograms/Solid_Waste/index.aspx.
- For in-house poultry composting, no solid waste program approval is needed provided the resulting compost is managed properly.
- On-site burial is considered open dumping and is not an acceptable practice for mortalities not related to infectious diseases where other options are available.
- In-field composting is not normally allowed but may be allowed in some circumstances due to this emergency. MDE and MDA should be consulted prior to initiating the activity. Choose locations wisely so that it doesn't cause surface water impact.
- Windrows should be placed on a disposable plastic tarp to reduce infiltration.
- Windrows should be blanketed with a bulking agent (straw, wood chips etc.) to reduce nuisances and runoff, and to improve the composting process. Windrows may need to be covered with a tarp to further reduce the potential for nuisances and contaminated runoff.
- Windrows should be constructed and operated in accordance with University of Maryland Extension Service Fact Sheet 801: Guidelines for In-House Composting of Catastrophic Poultry Mortality: <http://extension.umd.edu/publications/PDFs/FS801.pdf>. (See also references to other guidance documents following).

On-line resources:

University of Maryland Extension Service Fact Sheet 801: Guidelines for In-House Composting of Catastrophic Poultry Mortality:

<http://extension.umd.edu/publications/PDFs/FS801.pdf>

University of Maryland Extension Service Fact Sheet 723: Composting Catastrophic Event Poultry Mortalities:

<http://extension.umd.edu/publications/pdfs/fs723.pdf>

USDA/MD STATEMENT OF WORK, Animal Mortality Facility, Maryland fact sheet 316:

<http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/MW/sow316md.pdf>

USDA/NRCS Part 637 Environmental Engineering - National Engineering Handbook, Chapter 2, Composting:

http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb1044597.pdf

Questions can be referred to the Solid Waste Program at (410) 537-3315.