

# Poultry Mass Mortality Composting Options

Select a composting option that matches the nature and extent of losses, resources available and farm situation.

Method:	In-House Windrow	Outside Windrow	In-Shed Windrow
<b>Situation:</b>	Catastrophic loss where repopulation schedule permits and removal of dead from poultry house poses an environmental or disease risk.	Catastrophic loss where in-house is not an option and there is a desire to repopulate the house quickly.	Elevated mortality that exceeds the routine compost bin capacity.
<b>Procedures:</b>	Place a uniform mixture of carcass and litter on a base layer of litter and cover windrow with litter or other bulking agents (i.e. sawdust, woodchips). Requires 0.8 inches of litter per pound of meat per square foot. Excluding base and cover on a volume basis, this equals 1 part carcass to 2 parts litter. After ~14 days, turn windrow in-house or relocate and cover with bulking agent. Composting usually complete < 28 days.	At an approved site, place a uniform mixture, by volume of 1 part carcass to 2 parts bulking agent on a carbon base layer, cover with bulking agent and protect windrow with compost fleece or tarpaulin. Turn and recover windrow at ~14 days. If circumstances warrant, turning may be delayed and compost allowed to age for ~28 days.	When composting small volumes of mortality inside sheds, place carcasses on a layer of bulking agent, cover with bulking agent and repeat this layering process. Turning windrow at ~14 days (and re-covering with bulking agent) is essential since carcass decomposition can sometimes be slower in this layering procedure. Composting usually complete in ~28 days.

Consult your poultry company before selecting a compost method. For more assistance contact your local USDA - NRCS office, Conservation District or Cooperative Extension Service. A detailed presentation is available at the following website: <http://www.poultryextension.udel.edu>

Every farm needs a mass mortality plan!

Prepared by Bud Malone, University of Delaware  
 Funded by USDA, Conservation Innovation Grant.  
 The University of Delaware and USDA are equal opportunity providers and employers.