



## Dead Bird Composting Facility

*A roofed structure designed for composting the normal daily accumulation of dead birds from a poultry operation.*

### Description

Composting provides a safe and desirable method for disposing of dead birds by converting nitrogenous materials (manure and birds) and carboniferous materials (straw or sawdust) into a humus-like substance that can be used as a nutrient source for soil building and healthy plant growth.

### Benefits

- When properly managed, composting substantially reduces the volume of carcasses, kills most pathogens, prevents odors and produces a stable, odorless, humus-like material that is useful as a nutrient source and soil amendment.
- By eliminating the on-site burial of large numbers of carcasses, composting facilities reduce the potential for groundwater contamination and protect public health.

### Planning

- Consider on-farm traffic patterns, wind direction, drainage ditches, sensitive areas, topography and proximity of neighbors in determining where to place the composting facility.
- Is a carbon source available?
- What equipment is available?

### Tech Notes

- Follow the suggested straw-bird-litter recipe in creating the compost pile.
- Always completely cover dead birds with dry litter.
- Turn and reactivate compost before applying to land.
- Use a thermometer to monitor temperatures within the compost bin.
- Don't pile birds against compost walls or leave exposed to flies or scavengers.
- Contact the local soil conservation district or Cooperative Extension for assistance.

### Maintenance

- Obtain and follow a written operation and maintenance plan from NRCS. As a minimum, the instructions should detail the materials to be used in the compost mix, moisture content, temperature to be achieved, aeration schedule and end use for the compost.
- The compost facility should be inspected at least twice a year, when empty, for structural integrity.