



Regulations for disposal of poultry waste for Onsite Mobile Processing Units: Minnesota

Mobile Processing Waste

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) regulates the disposal of livestock processing waste. Protecting water resources and human health as well as preventing nuisance conditions are the primary goals of Minnesota's regulations.

Given the relatively small quantities of waste expected to be generated using a mobile processing unit, MPCA defers regulation to the Minnesota Board of Animal Health and encourages "best management practices" to be used for the waste materials. On-farm management of relatively small quantities of processing waste is preferred by producers and regulators alike.

The Minnesota Board of Animal Health (BAH) has excellent informational materials regarding best management practices available on the web:

<http://www.bah.state.mn.us/bah/carcass-disposal/>

This site provides management alternatives including burying and composting, and is complete with links to each alternative with best management practices detailed.

Burial and composting are the favored management practices.

AQ What is a Mobile Processing Unit?

Also referred to as Mobile Slaughter Units, MPU's are either an open or closed trailer structure towed behind a vehicle where animal meat processing can take place in various locations, often on the farm of origin where the animals were raised. The units often contain all the necessary components to complete animal slaughter and processing similar to fixed units, but on a smaller scale and in various locations. Producers who do not process large volumes of animals or do not want to transport animals off farm are using MPU's. MPU's are operated by either the animal producer or trained individuals who contract their processing unit and services to producers.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

MPU processing waste has the potential to contaminate water resources, pose a risk to human health and the environment or create nuisances if not properly managed. On the farm management of relatively small quantities of processing waste is preferred by the producer and regulators alike. Maintaining adequate separation distances from water resources and neighbors can help avoid problems.

Detailed information regarding the regulations that apply to poultry processing waste from mobile units can be found by contacting the Minnesota Board of Animal Health by phone at (651) 296-2942 or by email at animalhealth@state.mn.us.

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Burial

Burial is the preferred alternative for small amounts of material from a mobile processing unit. For burial, some simple requirements apply:

1. The process waste must be placed at least five feet above the seasonal high-water table.
2. Do not place the waste in sandy or gravelly soils.
3. Maintain at least 10 feet of separation between the waste and bedrock.
4. Immediately cover the waste with soil and be sure that it is buried deep enough to prevent scavenging by other animals (at least 3 feet).

Composting

If burial is not a viable option, composting may be. Composting must be done according to Minnesota Board of Animal Health rules. The rules are quite detailed, however, some of the operational requirements of the composting rules may not apply to on-farm management of small quantities of processing waste.

Advantages:

- Low biosecurity risk;
- Inexpensive;
- Environmentally sound practice.

Disadvantages:

- Labor-intensive practice;
- Requires impervious surface with rot-resistant walls and a cover to repel rain.

The producer is encouraged to reference the rules directly when considering composting as a management tool. When in doubt, it is best to contact the Minnesota Board of Animal Health for technical assistance.

Rules Summary

The Minnesota Board of Animal Health also provides a summary of the rules and the various management alternatives that are allowed in this fact sheet:

<http://www.bah.state.mn.us/bah/carcass-disposal/files/carcass-disposal-fact-sheet.pdf>

NOTE TO READER

At the time of this printing, the Minnesota Board of Animal Health was actively working on the rewriting of the Composting Rules. If you are considering composting as a management tool, please contact the Minnesota Board of Animal Health at the link below for the most up-to-date rules.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Minnesota Board of Animal Health
(651) 296-2942
animalhealth@state.mn.us

This information was assembled by Mike Degen, who enjoyed a 30 year career with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources providing technical assistance, compliance assurance and regulatory oversight in a variety of environmental programs including wastewater, drinking and groundwater, surface water quality, solid and hazardous waste management and environmental cleanup. His most recent work was in the agricultural runoff program, promoting clean water practices on the farm.