

Code of Practice for the Agricultural Use of Poultry Manure



ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Introduction

This code of practice was originally drafted in response to a recurring problem of fly infestation associated with the agricultural use of poultry manure in the areas of Ashford, Maidstone, Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils. It is a working document that provides an opportunity for stakeholders to participate in resolving problems proactively.

Stakeholders include:-

- Producers of poultry manure who need to ensure that it is of good quality and poses the minimum risk of causing a fly or odour problem when applied to land
- Hauliers who need to ensure that poultry manure is transported and delivered in a responsible manner
- End users who need to ensure that poultry manure is applied to land in such a way as to minimise risk of a fly or odour problem occurring
- The general public who may be affected when a fly or odour problem arises
- National Farmers Union
- Environment Agency

When applying the requirements of this code of practice each local authority should be mindful that the measures adopted to minimise risk of a fly or odour problem are proportionate to the benefit. It may not be reasonably practicable to avoid odour at property when applying poultry manure to agricultural land.

Whilst the requirements of this code of practice are specific to the agricultural use of poultry manure, they may also be considered relevant when applying other farm manures to agricultural land.

However, a failure to adopt the principles outlined in this code of practice may be used as evidence to demonstrate that an avoidable nuisance was likely to be occurring.

The remainder of this code of practice will therefore address the various steps necessary to achieve a satisfactory outcome when applying poultry manure to agricultural land.

Producers

It is essential that any poultry manures provided for agricultural use is of the highest quality, especially in terms of their potential for causing odour and becoming the source of an active insect and larval infestation. If it is necessary to store poultry

manure before its despatch, adequate precautions should be taken to minimise the potential for fly or odour nuisance. This may include monitoring of the stockpile, providing an effective treatment regime and temporary sheeting (if necessary).

Poultry manure should be kept as dry as reasonably practicable before despatch. At least 50% dry matter is desirable to reduce the likelihood of manure 'slumping' during field storage. Poultry manure with a lower dry matter content may require more careful management during field storage. For example, using straw bales as a temporary containment bund provide an option to minimise the risk of problems arising during field storage of 'wet' poultry manure. Prior to spreading, the poultry manure and straw can be mixed together and then applied to agricultural land as a single operation.

If poultry manure is going to be used as a surface dressing on pasture land or on a growing crop it should be applied in small droplets that will either air dry quickly or be incorporated into the soil matrix rapidly.

Poultry units should be inspected regularly to identify any active insect or larval infestation and treated promptly as necessary. The monitoring and treatment regime should be documented to demonstrate that adequate precautions are in place. An example of how to monitor insect and larval activity is outlined in Appendix 1.

Any poultry manure identified with an active infestation should not be despatched until a full treatment regime has been applied (this may take up to 4 weeks) and it can be demonstrated that no residual infestation remains.

Note that if Neporex is applied to the manure it will only destroy the early stage larvae. This means that later stage larvae will continue to develop into pupae and then adult flies. The Neporex treatment should therefore be supplemented by sticky traps, 'knock down' agents and baits to 'mop up' emerging adult flies.

Hauliers

During transit every effort should be taken by hauliers to minimise the impact that poultry manure may have on residential areas. It is essential that when poultry manure is delivered to the end user it is stored in such a manner to minimise the risk of fly and odour problems developing. When necessary, adequate sheeting should be available at short notice to cover field stores of poultry manure.

Hauliers should also ensure that:-

- Poultry manure with a dry matter content of less than 30% is transported using a suitable leak proof vehicle.
- Trailers are not overloaded, allowing potential for poultry manure to be deposited on the public highway.
- Where practicable, trailers are covered when haulage involves passing through residential areas or over long distances.
- Poultry manure is deposited at the final destination in narrow 'windrows' to enable it to be covered when necessary.

- Care should be taken to ensure that sufficient planning takes place so as to avoid putting stockpiles next to dwellings, places of work, popular leisure areas etc.
- Poultry manure should be stored on level ground to avoid run-off.
- Do not store poultry manure over field drains, or within ten metres of a watercourse, allowing for the extent of any possible slumping.
- The end user is aware of this code of practice and his responsibility to observe its recommendations.
- The end user has provided or has access to adequate sheeting, should it become necessary to cover the poultry manure.
- The end user is familiar with the Environment Agency guidance on poultry manure stockpiling and spreading particularly in relation to agricultural land within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone.

Care should also be taken to minimise the risk of depositing mud and poultry manure on the public highway as this can be hazardous to other road users and a potential breach of the Highways Act 1980.

Storage

Recent experience has suggested that field storage of poultry manure can attract complaints alleging fly and odour nuisance. It is therefore essential that the end user monitors the condition of the stockpile frequently and at least three times per week to ensure that no active infestation becomes established. If there is evidence of an active infestation the end user should immediately cover the stockpile for a minimum period of ten days before it is used (or until it is used) to ensure that any insects and larvae are destroyed.

When it is necessary to cover poultry manure, polythene sheeting of adequate gauge should be used. Apply a covering of soil to the edges of the polythene sheeting to exclude air and prevent 'wind whipping'. The end user should monitor the condition of the stockpile and reinstate any loose or damaged sheeting as necessary.

During the period between May and September, when soil conditions allow, it is preferable to deliver and spread poultry manure as a single operation. This may reduce allegations that field storage of poultry manure is causing a localised fly or odour problem. Alternatively, the end user should consider adopting a 'safety first' approach by covering a stockpile from the outset.

Any potential surface water run-off from a covered stockpile of poultry manure should be directed away from a field drainage system or local watercourse to minimise the risk of pollution.

Land Spreading

The application of poultry manure to agricultural land can attract complaints from nearby residents. It is therefore essential that the end user has access to the

necessary land spreading equipment before accepting a delivery of poultry manure and has the necessary manpower available to undertake land spreading efficiently.

Using a weather forecast will assist in choosing suitable conditions for spreading. For example, the best conditions are when air mixes to a great height above the ground, which are typically during sunny and windy days followed by cloudy and windy nights. These weather conditions ensure odours disperse quickly.

When applying poultry manure the following steps should be taken,

- On arable land incorporate poultry manure by ploughing, rotary cultivator or disc within 24 hours of application. This approach will minimise the risk of odour and flies affecting the immediate neighbourhood. If it is practicable to do so, the odour can be further reduced by ensuring that poultry manure is incorporated immediately after the spreading operation has been completed.
- Poultry manure applied to pasture land or other established crops should be applied in small droplets and should be free from infestation by insects and larvae.
- Poultry manure should not be applied when the soil is waterlogged, flooded, frozen hard, snow covered or cracked down to the depth of field drains or back-fill.
- Poultry manure should not be applied to steeply sloping land when there is an imminent risk of heavy rain as it may result in surface water run-off and pollution of a local watercourse
- The land spreading of poultry manure should be avoided during weekends and Bank Holidays when local residents are particularly sensitive to any odour emission. Where possible, avoid spreading during the hours of darkness as it is difficult to supervise and control such activities or see any potential off site impacts e.g. pollution of a local watercourse.

Notification of Land Spreading

When the producer of poultry manure has delivered, or has arranged to despatch poultry manure to a destination within the area of Ashford, Dover, Maidstone, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling or Tunbridge Wells BC he should notify the relevant officer using the contact details provided below. This will provide an opportunity for the officer to respond immediately to any complaints received and to monitor compliance with the recommendations of this code of practice.

Notification should include the following information,

- Address and contact details of the end user.
- Approximate total tonnage of the poultry manure.
- Name and contact details of the haulier.
- A brief indication of whether field storage and/or spreading is proposed.
- Anticipated date and duration of delivery.

Notification can be by electronic mail, facsimile or telephone and should be at weekly intervals. If the producer is unsure about which local authority to contact the details can be provided to Tunbridge Wells BC who in turn will notify the relevant officer.

The success of this arrangement will be entirely dependent upon the timely provision of this information, which should be retained by the producer for a minimum period of three months and provided upon request by the relevant officer.

Where can I get further information?

Further information is available in the three 'Managing Livestock Manures' booklets on the DEFRA website or from ADAS Gleadthorpe Research Centre (Tel 01623 844331),

- Making better use of livestock manures on arable land
- Making better use of livestock manures on grassland
- Spreading systems for slurries and solid manures

The DEFRA Code of Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Air, Soil and Water also contains helpful advice.

The Environment Agency guidance on poultry manure stockpiling and spreading also contains specific advice relating to agricultural land within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zones. Refer to the link below for further information.

<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/netregs/business/agriculture/61889.aspx>

Local Authority Contact Details

Ashford BC

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Other Participants in the Code of Practice

The following organisations have been involved in the production and support of this Code of Practice

Fridays Ltd
Groundscare & General Services Ltd
FGS Agri
Mr D Wanstall, Bank Farm Aldington

The National Farmers Union supports good agricultural practice and the responsible handling of poultry manure and encourages farmers to work with local communities to achieve a sustainable countryside that improves the quality of life for everyone.

Appendix 1

Monitoring fly activity in poultry units using a 'grid square' method involves the following steps,

For large units six monitoring squares (1 metre x 1 metre) should be marked out along the inside walls and the undersides of walkways. The border should be marked in white paint.

A count of flies within the monitoring squares should be made at regular intervals and at least twice a week during the period May-September.

There should also be six designated areas where larval activity can be monitored. Each should be approximately 0.5 metre x 0.5 metre and intrusively investigated as the larvae shun the light and burrow into the manure.

An approximate guide to assessing larval activity is,

0 = 0 larvae, 1 = 5% of manure covered by larvae, 2 = 10% of manure covered by larvae, 3 = 20% of manure covered by larvae, 4 = 30% of manure covered by larvae, 5 = 40% of manure covered by larvae.

The treatment of manure should be triggered when larval activity is assessed at 3 and no manure should be removed from the unit if larval activity is assessed at 2 or more.

The use of sticky traps and indicator boards is also recommended and these should be monitored and replaced regularly.

Staff should receive suitable training to enable them to effectively monitor and treat any infestations. A successful treatment regime will depend upon staff identifying the type of fly infestation and applying the correct product.