



Code of Practice for the use of Poultry Manure

**Draft Working Document
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Working Document

Introduction

The formulation of this Code of Practice (COP) has been prompted by the recurring problem of fly infestation associated with the use of poultry manure within a number of local authority areas in Dorset and Wiltshire. The intention of the COP is to provide a consistent approach to the way in which the participating local authorities will deal with problems associated with the use of poultry manure and the manner in which they will expect it to be used.

The primary goal of the COP is to address the issue of fly infestation and to prevent problems before they occur by working in partnership with those involved, rather than to take enforcement action against individuals after the event. It will also deal with the issue of odour control where possible.

It is hoped that the COP will be of benefit to all parties who are involved in the use of poultry manure including:

- producers who need to ensure that their product is of good quality and poses the minimum risk of causing a problem when used.
- transporters who need to ensure that manure is transported and deposited in a responsible manner for use.
- users who must ensure that manure is stored and used in such a way as to minimise the potential for problems to be caused, and
- the general public who are affected when fly infestations occur.

The participating Local Authorities would like to work with the various groups involved to prevent the recurrence of what is a significant issue causing both nuisance and potential health risks to large numbers of people.

While maintaining the desire to work with those people involved in the production and use of poultry manure, the participating Local Authorities will consider a failure to follow the COP as evidence in any enforcement action.

It is the common intent of the Local Authorities participating in this COP to take robust enforcement action against any company or individual who is identified as having caused infestations of flies to any location within their respective areas of authority.

In order to address all aspects of the use of poultry manure the COP is divided into sections, each of which is focused on a particular element of the use/disposal of poultry manure.

Producers

It is important if fly problems are to be prevented that manure supplied is of the best possible quality in terms of fly and maggot infestation, It is also important that manure supplied is capable of being stored in such a way as to prevent it causing a problem with flies.

- manure should be as dry as possible before it is allowed to be taken for use. This makes it difficult for flies to breed and also allows it to be stored in a manner which enables it to be covered more easily. A level of at least 50% dry matter is desirable and 30% dry matter should be the minimum. Manure with a dry matter content below 30% should not be supplied unless satisfied that it will be used and incorporated immediately. If the manure is to be used on pasture or for top dressing a growing crop, it is essential that it is applied only in small droplets that will either dry out or be taken into the soil very quickly. If it cannot be used it must be stored within a manageable facility and not a field store.
- regular inspections of poultry houses should be made to identify any infestations of maggots or flies at an early stage so that they can be treated as quickly as possible. A monitoring and treatment process should be implemented and good records maintained to show what has been done. Research of ADAS approved schemes suggests that one way of monitoring the level of fly and larval activity is to use a grid system. The use of ADAS endorsed schemes may be used to demonstrate 'Best Practice'.
 - a number of monitoring squares, (six for large houses) are marked out along the inside walls and the undersides of walkways. They should be 1 metre by 1 metre and marked out with white paint to form a border. A count of flies on the wall and ceiling squares should be made on a regular basis at all times and twice weekly during the summer months from the beginning of May until the end of September.
 - there should also be six designated areas where maggot activity is monitored. These should be approximately 0.5 metre square areas which are intrusively investigated. A rough guide to larval assessment is 0 = 0 larvae, 1 = 5% of manure covered by larvae, 2 = 10% of manure covered by larvae, 3 = 20% covered by larvae, 4 30% of manure covered by larvae, 5 = 40% of manure covered by larvae. Treatment of the manure should be triggered at index 3 and no manure should be taken from the house if two or more larvae are counted.
 - the use of sticky traps and indicator boards is also recommended and these should be monitored and changed regularly.
 - it is recommended that all staff receive suitable training to enable them to effectively monitor and treat any infestations.
- manure should not be removed if it is infested with larvae and full treatment of any manure that routine inspection shows to be infested should be completed prior to its removal. This may take up to four weeks to be completely effective so forward planning is essential.

Transporters

When transporting poultry manure from its point of origin to the place where it is delivered, it is important that every care is taken to minimise the impact that it may have on residential areas during transit. It is important that the manure is not transported unless it is of sufficient quality. It is also important that when the manure is delivered to the end user it is done so in such a way as to enable it to be stored/covered if necessary at the end of each day. It is the responsibility of the haulier to ensure that:

- manure which does not have a minimum content of 30% dry matter is only transported in suitable vehicles which are designed for the purpose.
- trailers are not overloaded allowing manure to be spilled onto the highway.
- trailers should be covered if practical, particularly if moving more than short distances or through residential areas.
- manure is delivered in such a way as to enable it to be easily covered. Experience has shown that narrow rows or 'windrows' of manure are more easily covered.
- the recipients are aware of this COP and their responsibilities to observe it.
- that the recipient of the manure has made provision for covering the manure if necessary. The manure should then be covered at the end of each day of delivery.
- delivery should only be made if the contractor is satisfied that the recipient is aware of the COP and their responsibilities under it. Delivery should not be made if the recipient is unable to ensure that the manure is adequately covered, should this be necessary, and should be returned to its point of origin or other suitable storage facility.

It is also important that care is taken to prevent mud being deposited on the highway as this can pose additional dangers to other road users. When necessary, signs should be posted to alert drivers that there may be mud on the roads and this should be cleared up as soon as possible. Depositing mud on the highway is a breach of the Highways Act 1980.

Storage

Recent experience has shown that the storage of manure is one of the most important factors in preventing fly infestations. It has been seen that even manure that is produced, transported and delivered in a dry, fly free state can in some cases become infested and cause problems. It is important when manure is delivered and is being stored without covering because it has been supplied in a fly free condition, that the pile is monitored by the recipient on a frequent basis at least three times per week to ensure that there is no fly activity. At the first sign of fly activity the manure should be covered. It is therefore essential that recipients of poultry manure have stocks of suitable sheeting material before receiving the manure so that it can be used at very short notice. During the summer months from the beginning of May to the end of August recipients storing manure near to residential areas should consider covering the manure if storing for more than a few days, as the covering will also help to prevent any odour nuisance from occurring. While it is important that manure is stored in such a way as to prevent fly nuisance, care should also be taken to ensure that other codes of practice designed to protect land and watercourses are observed.

Although it may not be necessary to cover all piles of poultry manure, the potential for problems to occur is increased during the summer months from the beginning of May to the end of September. During this time users of poultry manure may wish to take a 'safety first' approach when deciding whether a pile of poultry manure needs to be covered.

When storing poultry manure it is the responsibility of the recipient to ensure that:

- any piles of manure that are not covered on delivery must be inspected frequently and at least three times per week for signs of fly infestation and a record kept of these checks for examination by the Local Authority. At the first sign of fly activity on or around the pile the manure must be covered immediately.
- all stored manure that needs to be covered is covered at the end of each day of delivery to prevent flies migrating to or from the pile. This will serve to reduce the odour emitted during storage, prevent flies infesting the manure and raise the temperature inside the pile to a level which will kill any flies or larvae which are already inside. It will also help to prevent the potential for odour nuisance to any nearby residential premises.
- the manure should be deposited between two pre-prepared earthen ditches or bunds in narrow rows or 'windrows'.
- the manure should then be tightly covered with polythene in such a way as to leave no gaps. Suitable polythene can be obtained from most agricultural suppliers.
- the edges of the polythene should then be buried in the ditches by back filling to prevent flies escaping and to prevent the wind from removing the sheeting. Experience has shown that simply weighting down the sheeting is not effective and will not be considered satisfactory. The piles of manure should be checked every four days at the minimum by the recipient to ensure that there is no damage to the polythene. Damaged polythene will need to be replaced.
- all poultry manure that needs to be covered in this way should remain covered for a minimum of ten days before it is used or until it is used to ensure that any flies or fly larvae are killed and the pile does not become more infested.
- avoid putting storage piles next to dwellings, places of work, popular leisure areas etc.
- manure should be stored on level ground to avoid run off.
- do not store manure over field drains or within ten metres of a watercourse.

Spreading

The spreading of poultry manure has been associated with a number of fly infestations in recent years, even where it has been demonstrated that the manure used is free from infestation, It is recognised by independent entomologists that the odour given off during spreading can attract naturally occurring populations of flies and causes them to artificially concentrate and increase in numbers. When spreading poultry manure it is important that the following steps are taken:

- manure should be incorporated by deep cultivation within 24 hours of spreading. This is in accordance with the DEFRA Air Code 1998 and will minimise odour emissions and prevent access by flies that may be in the area.
- when spreading on pasture, only manure that is free from flies and larvae and of low odour should be used. Animals should not graze fields until the minimum time period recommended by ADAS has passed. Care should also be taken that other DEFRA Codes of Practice for protection of soil and water are followed and that manure is not over-applied. (Spreading of manure which has been delivered and stored before spreading will be deemed to be the responsibility of the farmer and not the producer.)
- poultry manure should not be applied to ground that is waterlogged, flooded, frozen hard or snow covered, It should not be applied within ten metres of ponds or watercourses.
- the spreading of manure on Bank Holidays and Sundays should be avoided.
- operators should make every effort to remove mud and manure from the tractor and trailer/spreader wheels before driving on the highway.

Notification

The intention of the COP is to prevent as far as possible further incidents of fly infestation in the areas covered by the participating Local Authorities. The success of the COP needs to be monitored so that problems can be identified and alterations made if necessary. In order for this to be effective it is vital that the participating authorities know where and when poultry manure is to be stored and spread. The persons in the best position to provide the required information are the people transporting the manure and the people taking delivery of the manure. It is also important that producers keep records of where manure is being taken when it leaves their farm which can be made available to Local Authorities upon request. When an order for poultry manure is placed for delivery within any of the participating authorities:

- the transporter shall notify the relevant Local Authority Environmental Health Department by fax, phone or e-mail on a weekly basis of the locations, name of recipient and date of delivery of poultry manure from the previous week.
- the Local Authority shall be notified at least 24 hours before the spreading of previously field stored manure takes place.
- the producer shall keep records of the intended delivery address of the manure. These records shall be made available to Local Authorities for verification upon request.
- notification should be in the form of e-mail or fax or telephone. The required e-mail addresses, fax and telephone numbers can found attached to this COP.
- if the transporter does not know which Local Authority area the delivery address is in, the details can be sent to North Dorset District Council and it will then be provided to the correct Local Authority.

Contact Details

North Dorset District Council
Nordon
Salisbury Road
Blandford Forum
Dorset
DT11 7LL

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.