

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
INTERIM CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

ANIMAL MORTALITY FREEZERS

(No.)
CODE 774



DEFINITION

A freezer unit capable of freezing and storing poultry carcasses or small animals until such time they can be moved off-site for recycling and/or rendering.

PURPOSE

This practice may be applied as part of a conservation management system to provide a suitable disposal method of dead poultry in order to prevent pollution of water and soil resources. This standard covers the planning and design of on farm freezers for the disposal of dead poultry or small animals encountered on farms as part of normal farming operations.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

This practice applies where current disposal practices of dead poultry or small animals are unsatisfactory and where there is a need to improve sanitation, reduce pollution, and/or recycle dead animals into a feed source. There must be a vendor capable of safely collecting and transporting the carcasses from the farm to the recycling or rendering plant.

CRITERIA

General. All Federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations governing waste management, pollution abatement, and health and safety shall be strictly followed. The owner or operator shall be responsible for securing all required permits, approvals, and registration and for the operation of the unit in accordance with appropriate laws, rules, and regulations. Required permits must be obtained prior to installation and operation.

Vendor. The vendor used for removing frozen animal carcasses from the farm must be approved by the state. The landowner must have a written contract with the vendor stating the vendor's responsibility for properly handling animal mortality and their schedule for removing animal carcasses from the farm. The schedule for removing the dead animals must coincide with the freezer capacity.

Capacity. The required freezer capacity shall be cable of storing and freezing all animal or poultry mortality until such time it can be removed off-site by an approved vender. Freezer capacity shall match the animal mortality and vendor's schedule for removing animal carcasses.

Freezer capacity shall be based on the weight of animal or poultry, average mortality, and planned days between scheduled removal of carcasses off-site.

Weight of animal or poultry used to determine capacity shall be the maximum weight of the animal or poultry between scheduled removal off-site.

Average mortality shall be based on mortality data over several growing cycles (excluding catastrophic losses). Average mortality used to determine capacity shall be based on mortality data for the period of time prior to removal off-site. In the absence of specific landowner mortality

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data, mortality data shall be based on similar operations in the local area.

Temperature. The freezers shall be self contained units designed to freeze animal carcasses before any decomposition can occur and maintain the carcasses at temperatures between 22° and 26° F. The units must be sealed against weather and air leakage.

Material. Freezers installed under this standard shall be constructed of durable material with a life expectancy equal to the planned life of the structure. Freezer containers shall be leak-proof to minimize odor and leachate pollution.

Location. To minimize transfer of diseases, freezers shall be located sufficient distance from buildings used to house the animals and other residences. The minimum distance shall be 150 feet or as recommended by the state veterinarian, whichever is larger.

To ensure visual acceptability of this practice, freezer(s) shall be located to reduce the visibility from nearby residences and from traveled roadways. This may be accomplished by screening with privacy fences or landscaping plants.

Freezers shall be located near all-weather roads to facilitate the loading and transporting of carcasses from the farm. Where needed, all-weather roads shall be constructed to facilitate the equipment used in the removing of carcasses from the freezers. All-weather roads shall meet the requirements of NRCS conservation practice standard Access Road, Code 560.

Protection. To provide for structure stability and safety, the freezer shall be located on a firm foundation consisting of an earthen, gravel, limerock, timber, or concrete pad as recommended by the manufacturer.

The freezer shall be located above the 25-year flood plain. Freezers shall be located sufficient height above normal ground to prevent surface water from posing a problem in the loading or unloading of the units. The site shall be graded to drain or divert all overland runoff safely from the structure and surrounding work area.

Electrical installation. Electrical components and installation shall meet the requirements of the National Electrical Code (NEC) and state and local codes for outdoor installation. All electric wiring shall be in a conduit. Installation shall be certified in writing by a qualified licensed electrician.

Safety. Highly visible waterproof warning signs, such as "INEDIBLE" or similar signs shall be posted on the facility to identify the use of the freezer.

Vegetation. All disturbed areas shall be vegetated in accordance with NRCS conservation practice standard Critical Area Planting, Code 342.

CONSIDERATIONS

Growers should carefully estimate the capacity needed to manage daily mortalities and where necessary include other disposal methods in their resource management plan to cover situations in which catastrophic losses occur.

Consideration should be given to providing alternative power generation to the freezer units in case of power failure.

Consideration should be given to the operating cost of the freezer unit. Local energy cost rates should be used to estimate these expenses.

Consideration should be given to economics, the overall waste management system plan, and safety and health factors.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans and specifications shall be prepared in accordance with the criteria of this standard and shall describe the requirements for applying the practice to achieve its intended use.

The plans shall also include the number, size, location of mortality storage freezers, and foundation support for the freezer.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

An operation and maintenance plan shall be developed that is consistent with the purposes of the practice, its intended life, safety requirements, and the criteria for its design.

Freezers must be operated properly to maximize equipment life and minimize potential problems. Temperatures should be monitored regularly to ensure proper freezing of carcasses.

The freezer must be loaded according to manufacturer's recommendations and not exceed the design capacity.

Freezers shall only be used only for the freezing of dead animals associated with the planned operation.

The freezer must be inspected periodically (e.g. after each transfer of the carcasses to trucks for transport off-site) to ensure that all components are operating as planned and in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. The inspection shall check for leaks and structural integrity of the freezer unit and proper freezing temperature.

The O&M plan shall include but not limited to the following.

- Name and telephone number of the vendor responsible for removing animal carcasses from the freezers to off-farm facilities.
- Schedule for removing animal carcasses from the freezer(s).
- Capacity of freezer.
- Maximum loading capacity of freezer(s).
- Freezer operating temperature.
- Method of mortality disposal for catastrophic losses
- Contact(s) and phone numbers of person(s) to contact in case of catastrophic losses.

REFERENCES

NRCS conservation practice standards
Access Road, Code 560
Critical Area Planting, Code342