

USDA  
NATURAL RESOURCES  
CONSERVATION SERVICE

MARYLAND CONSERVATION  
PRACTICE STANDARD

**AMENDMENTS FOR  
TREATMENT OF  
AGRICULTURAL WASTE**

CODE 591  
(Reported by Animal Units)

**DEFINITION**

Treatment of manure, process wastewater, storm water runoff from lots or other high intensity areas, and other wastes with chemical or biological additives.

**PURPOSE**

To alter the physical and/or chemical characteristics of the waste stream to facilitate the implementation of a waste management system to:

1. Improve or protect air quality;
2. Improve or protect water quality;
3. Improve or protect animal health;
4. Alter the consistency of the waste stream to facilitate implementation of a waste management system.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE  
APPLIES**

This practice applies where the use of a chemical or biological amendment will alter the physical and chemical characteristics of the waste stream as a part of a planned waste management system. This practice does not include amendments added to the animal feed. This practice applies to those amendments added to the waste stream after excretion.

This practice may be used to treat poultry litter where high ammonia emissions are a water and air quality concern. This practice may also be used in poultry houses where the continuous reuse of litter produces high ammonia and unfavorable growing conditions.

This practice may be used to reduce leaching and runoff of soluble phosphorus.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

The use of amendments to suppress ammonia volatilization from litter will reduce emissions from poultry facilities. In these confined spaces, they may improve air quality for poultry living and humans working in this environment. Additionally, some amendments suppress bacterial pathogens in litter and may improve poultry health. With the reduction in ammonia in houses, the ventilation may be reduced resulting in potential energy savings.

The use of amendments to reduce ammonia and other emissions from manure in confined spaces may allow altered ventilation strategies at an appreciable energy savings.

The reduction of ammonia emissions will also increase the proportion of nitrogen in the manure, making the manure a more valuable and balanced fertilizer.

Some amendments have been shown to effectively impact multiple purposes of this standard and other aspects of a livestock production operation. Preference should be given to amendments with the greatest environmental and economic benefit.

The use of an amendment may alter the composition of the waste stream. The use of amendments should be limited to situations where impacts of the altered waste stream on other aspects of the planned system have been identified.

The selection of amendments should be mutually agreed by all contractual parties and compatible with the intended end use of the litter or waste.

Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically, and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact the [Natural Resources Conservation Service - Maryland](#) or visit the [electronic Field Office Technical Guide \(eFOTG\)](#).

## **CRITERIA**

### **Criteria Applicable to All Purposes**

Refer to the Maryland Conservation Practice Fact Sheet, *Recommendations for Poultry Acidifying Litter Amendments*, for a list of acceptable poultry litter amendments. The fact sheet addresses the rate, timing, method, and safety concerns for use of the products.

**Laws, Rules, and Regulations** - Use of amendments as a part of a waste management system shall be planned and implemented to meet all federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations.

**Labeling and Instructions for Use** - Products to be used as manure amendments shall be labeled or accompanied by instructions containing the following information as a minimum:

1. Active ingredients and their percentage of the whole. Proprietary terminology may be used as long as the actual chemical and/or biological names are included;
2. The purpose(s) for which the amendment is intended;
3. Recommended application rate(s) to achieve the intended purpose(s);
4. Application timing and methodology to optimize the effectiveness of the amendment;
5. Incorporation requirements;
6. Special handling and storage requirements for the amendment;
7. Any safety concerns relating to the use of the amendment and recommended measures to overcome the safety concern, including any required personal protective equipment.

**Validation of Product** - The specific rate, timing, and application methodology of an amendment to achieve a needed level of treatment addressing a specific purpose must be documented by the Delaware or Maryland Cooperative Extension or other independent research entity acceptable to the NRCS. Documentation from peer-reviewed journals is preferable. The effectiveness of the amendment under different climatic factors shall be included in the documentation, or if there is no

difference in effectiveness, the documentation shall so state. Potential adverse impacts of the amendment on the environment shall also be identified in the documentation. It shall be the responsibility of the amendment provider to furnish the documentation to the NRCS.

## **PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

Plans and specifications for this practice shall be prepared in accordance with the previously listed criteria. Plans and specifications shall contain sufficient detail to ensure successful implementation of this practice. Documentation shall be in accordance with the section "Supporting Data and Documentation" in this standard.

## **OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

An operation and maintenance (O&M) plan shall be developed and reviewed with the operator and owner prior to implementation of the practice. The O&M plan shall be consistent with the purposes of the practice, safety considerations, label directions, and other instructions provided by the vendor.

The O&M plan shall detail all safety precautions necessary when handling the specific chemicals or biological amendments to be used.

The O&M plan shall provide for record keeping in sufficient detail to document the product used, the date, location, rate, and method of application.

**SUPPORTING DATA AND DOCUMENTATION**

The following is a list of the minimum data and documentation to be recorded in the case file:

1. Location of the practice on the conservation plan map;
2. Assistance notes. The notes shall include dates of site visits, name or initials of the person who made the visit, specifics as to alternatives discussed, decisions made, and by whom;
3. The name of the amendment, the purpose(s) for its use, and the product rate and form;
4. Application methodology, including timing, equipment mixing, instructions, etc.

**REFERENCES**

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3. Moore. *Symposium: Focus on Phosphorus*. pg. 696-698.
4. Moore, P.A., T.C. Daniel, D.R. Edwards and D.M. Miller, 1996. *Evaluation of Chemical Amendments to Reduce Ammonia Volatilization from Poultry Litter*. Poultry Science, 75:315-320.
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8. Terzich, M., 1998. *Poultry Litter Treatment – PLT*. Proceedings to the 1998 National Poultry Waste Management Symposium, pp. 108-116.
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12. USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, May 6, 2003. *Treating Poultry Litter with Aluminum*. Agronomy Technical Note No. 3.
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