



Can catastrophic turkey losses ...



be composted in-house ...



Introduction to Research and Demonstration

An avian influenza (AI) outbreak in 2002 affected 197 poultry farms in Virginia and had an estimated cost of \$130 million. In 2004 - 2005, a research and demonstration project was initiated to investigate the feasibility and practicality of in-house composting turkey mortalities (heavy hens and toms) as a method of disposal and disease containment.

Methods and Materials

Carbon materials used included: hardwood sawdust; aged, weathered woodchips with relatively high moisture; built-up litter; starter litter or wood shavings; and blend of starter litter and built-up litter. Turkey carcass treatments included: whole carcasses mixed and piled; shredded and tilled carcasses, mixed and piled; and crushed carcasses mixed and piled.

Results

- Very little carcass remained after two weeks.
- Temperatures reached at least 130 degrees for 5 days
- All four carbon materials were effective in composting.
- Tilling and crushing increased temperatures and decreased down time by 3 and 11 days.

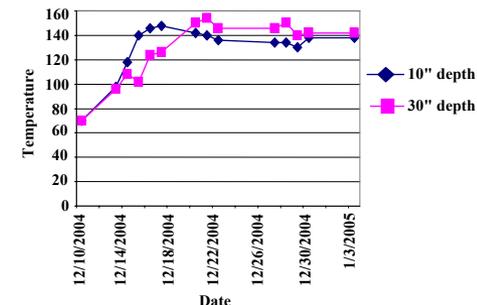


Figure 1. Temperatures of woodchips with whole carcass treatment



Carcass remains after only 13 days



Field Day for poultry farmers & industry

Methods of Disposal Utilized in 2002 Avian Influenza Outbreak	Number of Birds	Percent of Total
Composting (Ag-Bag & In-House)	43,000	0.9
Incineration	641,000	13.4
Landfilling	3,103,000	65.5
Slaughter	943,000	19.9
On-Site Burial	15,000	0.3
Total	4,732,000	100

as a rapid response and biosecurity tool?