

# Factsheet

## Storage and spreading of poultry manure

July 2014

The storage and spreading of manure from a poultry unit is not regulated by the Environmental Permit for the poultry site (or broiler farm). The waste should be spread in accordance with the Code of Good Agricultural Practice, which is a statutory code. Where land lies within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone additional measures will be required.

The use of manure from intensive poultry sites is an established agricultural practice. The manure contains readily available nitrogen (in the form of nitrate) which makes it useful to farmers as a sustainable fertiliser. There is legislation which controls the use and storage of this manure.

### Nitrate Vulnerable Zones

Where land close to a farm is designated as a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ), farmers must carefully plan their manure applications to avoid applying too much nitrogen to the land. They must also take additional measures to protect the environment. Please see our website for further information

<https://www.gov.uk/nitrate-vulnerable-zones>

### Manure storage

Commonly farmers will store manure in temporary field heaps prior to spreading. We encourage farmers to locate such field heaps in areas where they will not generate odour nuisance. The Nitrate Pollution Prevention Regulations 2013 allow field heaps so long as they are located and constructed in accordance with the following rules:

#### You must:

- Only store poultry manures in field heaps if they are solid enough to be stacked in a free-standing heap and do not give rise to free drainage from within the stacked material. Field heaps should be constructed to occupy as small a surface area as possible.
- Cover any poultry manure without bedding/litter which is stored in an field heap with an impermeable sheet

#### You must not locate field heaps:

- Within 10 metres of a surface water or land drain.
- Within 30 metres of a surface water if the land is steeply sloping.
- Within 50 metres of a spring, well or borehole.
- On land likely to become waterlogged.
- On land likely to flood.
- In any single position for 12 successive months.
- And you must
- Leave a two year gap before returning to the same site.
- Identify the location of the field sites on your risk map.

## Manure spreading

The NVZ rules also require a farmer to adhere to the following rules for spreading manure:

- Spread no more than 250 kilograms/Nitrogen per hectare in any 12 months.
- Closed periods for spreading must be adhered to.
- Carry out a field inspection prior to spreading.
- Comply with non-spreading areas and conditions.
- Prepare a risk map for land on which you intend to spread manures.
- Incorporate organic manures into bare soil and stubble where appropriate.
- Keep records of applications of manure.

It is an offence to break these rules and if they are breached we would take enforcement action in line with our published Enforcement and Sanctions guidance. In addition the farmer would risk losing the government subsidy payment (Single Farm Payment).

The Code of Good Agricultural Practice also states that manure management plans and nutrient management plans should be produced to manage the spreading of manure. Both of these are designed to reduce the environmental impact of spreading manures. These measures limit the odour disturbance from poultry manure but do not eradicate them.

## How is manure storage and spreading regulated?

We regulate any pollution to water from manure storage or spreading. We also regulate NVZ compliance. Further information on NVZs and the Code of Good Agricultural Practice can be found on our website at

<https://www.gov.uk/nitrate-vulnerable-zones>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-our-water-soil-and-air>

Odour or flies from a field heap would be considered a statutory nuisance and would be regulated by the local council.

customer service line  
03708 506 506

incident hotline  
0800 80 70 60

floodline  
0345 988 1188  
0845 988 1188

[www.gov.uk/environment-agency](http://www.gov.uk/environment-agency)