

NEW BOARD OF ANIMAL HEALTH DISPOSAL PROCEDURES

by Dr. Jim Watson, State Veterinarian



The Board of Animal Health has been working with other state agencies, federal agencies, universities and associations for several months preparing for the possibility of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in Mississippi.

One of the lessons learned from states that experienced outbreaks is the need for immediate depopulation and disposal of infected flocks. In order to respond quickly, the Board of Animal health has enacted an emergency rule requiring each poultry grower to develop a mass mortality disposal plan for their farm.

The purpose of the plan is to pre-identify what type of disposal a grower will choose should any type of mass mortality event such as heat loss, natural disaster or disease loss occur. Birds may be disposed of by burial, composting in or outside the house, and in certain situations landfills can be used.

Burial is the preferred option because it removes the infected birds from the premises immediately without moving them up and down the road. Burial has traditionally been the method of disposal during heat loss, tornados and Hurricane Katrina.

Burial will allow an infected farm to move more quickly to cleaning and disinfection and could mean the farm gets back into operation more quickly

Rumors have circulated recently that burial of carcasses or debris on your property may result in having to declare your property as a land fill and attach some notice to the deed of your property. I have confirmed with DEQ that **this is NOT the case**. State and Federal Laws allow the owner to bury carcasses or debris on their own property as long as it meets state requirements.

The mortality plan required by the emergency rule will be implemented by NRCS, therefore ensuring that the plan meets all state environmental requirements. Growers should contact the local NRCS Office to request assistance developing the plan.

NRCS will pinpoint an appropriate burial site that has a stable soil type and that is not prone to flooding or too close to an underground water table.

The Board of Animal Health has recently implemented a texting alert service. **To stay up to date on poultry information from the State Vet's Office simply text "POULTRY" to 70000.**

If you have any questions, please call my office at 601-359-1170.