

Improved Management Makes Volume Dead-Animal Disposal Unnecessary

BY HERBERT C. JORDAN
Associate Professor
Penn State

At least once each year a producer calls with a problem of dead bird disposal. More than half of all these cases since 1959 have a management problem which worsens a dead bird disposal situation. If your total (flock - over - time) mortality is above the following figures cut it down BEFORE you have a dead bird disposal problem.

If *total mortality is above 2 percent in broilers, 3 percent in started pullets, 4 percent in roasters, 5 percent in capons, 6 percent in commercial layers, 7 percent in turkeys, 8 percent in chukars, 9 percent in Bobwhite quail, 10 percent in pheasants, 11 percent in young rabbits - try the following to reduce mortality and reduce a dead animal disposal problem if you have one.

You must have several goals:

- Cut real total mortality in half over one to three years.

- Reduce all late mortality to zero to one percent for the last two-thirds of time the flock is grown.

- Cull or allow actual mortality to happen before birds have been in the house one-third of the allotted time. Late mortality hurts everyone, early mortality does too but it is indicative of future problems and less expensive. Lightweight birds are disposed of easier and eat less feed.

- Remove all sick birds from any flock every day and place them in a hospital pen, let them recover and go back into the commercial pen or isolated pen or die naturally, chill them and take them to the lab until you know what your flock problem is, then correct it. Allow a sick bird enough time to tell you what is wrong with it or the flock. Taking birds to the lab once without use of a hospital pen may allow you to miss the real disorder.

- Take more typical fresh dead and chilled carcasses to the lab. This establishes a file of information on your farm problem as well as being a proper disposal method.

- Stop all heavy bird mortality by treating the birds to correct the real problem. In a turkey field study at Rock Springs, PDA HMTIC manager Jack Yarnell found by weighing all dead birds that nearly all turkeys that died during the first half of the growing season weighed less than the flock average, while many of the turkeys that died the last half of the growing season weighed more than the flock average. Heavy dead birds are expensive to feed, to lose and to dispose of so stop heavy bird mortality. Do not allow older birds to die. Separate them and nurse them back to health.

- Render only fresh frozen dead animals, do not allow birds to decompose before rendering. Fresh dead make higher quality byproduct meal than decomposed dead.

- Use vaccine less but use it more wisely, carefully and by exact protocol to stop mortality.

- Use only the right medicine or therapeutic at the prescribed level for a given disease, parasite or

health disorder. Withdraw the medication at the prescribed time.

- Give more floor space, feeder or waterer space per bird.

- Reduce stress like toxic gas, high light intensity, long day length, dusty air, reuse of contaminated litter. Never reuse litter in rabbits - they get severe hepatic coccidiosis.

- Encourage water consumption by making more waterers available, keep water clean, fresh, cool and unpolluted.

- Use nutritional therapy if ration is old or animals are not eating. Vitamin-mineral-electrolyte

in water at one-half strength only 3 days a week may help.

- Manage your hospital pen closely (most people do not) so sick or recovering animals can educate you as to the real flock or herd problem. If an animal in a hospital pen recovers, return it to the flock or to an isolated grow out pen; if it dies, chill it and take it to the lab or burn or bury it.

- Before it dies, allow a sick animal time enough in the hospital pen to allow you to recognize symptoms. It may help to diagnose the real cause of the mortality problem.

- Once you have a dead animal, render or freeze it immediately after death, bury it away from a water shed with plenty of soil around each carcass, or burn in in a fire over 1800°F until it is reduced to ashes. Plowing birds less than two pounds dead body weight each into a dead furrow works better than leaving them lay and decompose on the surface of the ground as is done with hundreds of thousands of wild animals in Pennsylvania annually. Some township officials complain about using dead furrows for disposal because of possible water

transfer of pollution or carrion hunters digging them up. It is best soil away from all water sheds.

If crops are to use nutrients from decomposing dead birds, the dead birds should be no more than 12 to 16 inches beneath the surface of the soil on cropland.

A bulletin on dead bird disposal is available at your county agricultural Extension office, or if you wish to compost dead animals, write to Dr. Dennis Murphy, R#2 Box 229A, Princess Anne, MD 21853.

*Percent mortality is calculated by flock.

GREAT GROWIN'



NEW
ASGROW RX706

- ★ 109 Days
- ★ Yield Reports...
Talk Of The Town



ASGROW RX788

- ★ 113 Days
- ★ Proven Performer
For Three Years

EMMAUS
215-967-4131
MIFFLINBURG
717-966-3841

**CALL FOR COMPLETE
YIELD INFORMATION**

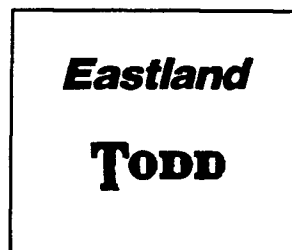
YORK DIVISION
55 Willow Springs Circle
York, PA 17402
717-764-9814

SEEDWAY
INC

**Listen To The Talk Around Town,
And Then Talk To Your Seedway Dealer -
He Has The Hybrids That Measure Up...**

NEW
EASTLAND 541

- ★ 103 Days
- ★ Attractive Single Cross
With Good Yield For
Maturity



TODD M7800

- ★ 113 Days
- ★ Single Cross With An
Excellent Reputation...
Yields and Stands



Call Seedway For The Dealer In Your Area!