

**IN-HOUSE COMPOSTING  
IN HIGH-RISE  
LAYER HOUSES**

**C. W. Pitts  
Professor Of  
Entomology**

posting using a turner attached to the front of a skid loader. The turner consists of a rotating drum with teeth on it that spins and throws the manure to one side. This process aerates the stacks of manure to ensure proper composting.

Fly control in high-rise houses continues to be a problem for producers. New techniques continue to be evaluated that we hope will give producers the highest level of fly control.

The latest tool to be evaluated for fly control is in-house com-

This procedure works in several ways to be attractive to poultry producers. The process helps dry the manure, it mechanically kills fly maggots as it spins and throws the manure, the composting process elevates the temperature and kills maggots, and the high levels of ammonia also helps kill maggots.

Learning how to operate this piece of equipment is still being studied. Questions that need to be answered are:

- How often do we need to run the compost mixer?
- What configuration works best for the windrows of manure?

- How do we minimize ammonia production and release?
- How much wear and tear does the compost mixer place on the skid loader?
- How often does the composted manure have to be removed from the poultry house?

The procedure we are using is to run the composter twice a week. This schedule appears to be effective in killing maggots. Our early results show that the composter definitely reduces the number of maggots in the composted as compared to the uncomposted manure. Additionally, the temperature in the composting manure stacks

rises to above 140 degrees Fahrenheit, which is high enough to kill maggots.

Also, ammonia levels are being measured in the composted area and are being compared to non-composted areas. The results from these measurements show that ammonia levels are higher in composted areas when compared to the noncomposted manure. It indicates that caution must be taken when working in the composting area as the ammonia levels are too high for workers without approved respirators. Further, these levels may also be detrimental to the birds in the cages above.

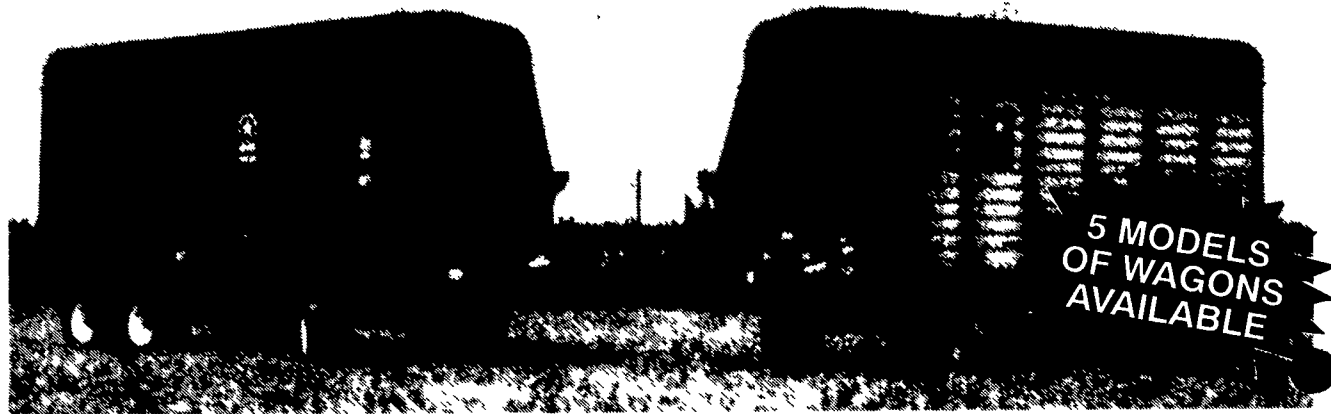
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