

**POULTRY MORTALITY COMPOSTING FACILITY (PMCF)
(CODE 316)**

DESCRIPTION

A Poultry Mortality Composting Facility (PMCF), for the purposes of the MACS Program, is a roofed structure designed for the composting of the normal daily accumulation of dead birds from a poultry growing or breeding operation.

PURPOSE

The practice is intended to eliminate the on-site burial of large numbers of carcasses as the principal disposal method of a poultry operation, thus reducing the potential for groundwater contamination. When properly managed, composting greatly reduces the volume of carcasses, kills most pathogens, prevents odors, and produces a stable, odorless, humus-like material, which is useful as a fertilizer substitute and a soil amendment.

CONDITION

This practice applies where: (1) Composting is needed to treat and manage waste organic material; (2) Adequate area is available for installation; (3) Foundation materials are sufficiently stable; (4) Sufficient cropland is available for proper compost utilization; and (5) State and local laws allow composting of animal carcasses.

POLICIES

1. The applicant must be a poultry producer.
2. A PMCF must be built on the property where poultry is being produced or raised in sufficient numbers. The minimum flock size on the property must be equal to 15,000 broilers, 15,000 roasters, or 4,400 layers. Cost-share is only available for the normal on-farm flock size. For capacities higher than justified by the existing flock, a Certification of Imminent Start-up or Expansion of a Poultry Growing Operation (SECTION III, # 20) must be submitted with the MACS Water Quality Project Form. The composter capacity will be based on NRCS standards for normal mortality rates of the particular type of flock (as opposed to catastrophic die-offs). Any additional composting capacity will be built entirely at the owner's expense.
3. Only poultry from the farm on which the structure is located may be composted in the PMCF. (Exceptions to these provisions may be made by the Department on a case-by-case basis. Questions of biosecurity and operating efficiency will be considered.)
4. When a *new* PWSS and composter are to be built at the same time with MACS funds, the composter must be freestanding or attached to the *outside* of the PWSS. If the farmer wishes to build an inside composter when building a new PWSS, he or she will absorb *all* the cost of the extra bays that will be required to accommodate the composter.

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5. If the applicant has previously received a MACS grant for a PWSS, he/she may be eligible for an inside composter provided the following criteria are met:
 - a. Sufficient excess floor space is available in the PWSS. Sufficient space would be provided in a PWSS that was used at 30 - 69% of its total capacity. A PWSS storing greater than 69% of its capacity would not be eligible for an inside composter due to inadequate space. An applicant with a PWSS used at less than 30% capacity may be subject to probation and would be ineligible for a MACS grant at this time.
 - b. A minimum of four bays are required for any inside composter. Four bays can accommodate a 2-bin or 4-bin composter efficiently. If a 4-bin composter is needed, two bins are to be placed on one wall and the other two bins on the opposite wall of the PWSS.
6. If the applicant has previously received a MACS grant for a PWSS and/or PMCF on this farm or any other farm and demonstrates the need for an additional composter, the Department must determine whether or not the applicant's use of the PWSS (or each of the PWSS's) has met and satisfied all applicable MACS Program requirements. To assist in making this determination, the SCDs shall provide the following information:
 - a. A written statement to the Department indicating the applicant meets all the eligibility requirements and summarizing the SCD's observations regarding the applicant's proper or improper use of the previously cost-shared PWSS(s). The SCD must submit this information on a current On-Farm Status Review(s) (SECTION V, #5).
 - b. If the applicant has not followed the guidelines for the operation and maintenance of the PWSS, the Department will deny the funding request for the composter. In such cases, once the applicant has demonstrated full compliance with the operation and maintenance requirements for the PWSS for at least 18 months, the Department may again consider a request for a MACS grant for a composter.
7. Mini-composters (movable, temporary composters lacking a permanent base and wall) are **not** eligible for cost-share assistance.
8. The applicant agrees to use the composting structure *only* for the treatment and containment of carcasses, other composting ingredients, and the *mobile farm equipment actually needed for the composting operation*.
9. The applicant must have an available tractor in good working condition and equipped with a front-end loader or skid loader that will be adequate to load and empty the composting area.

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10. The applicant agrees to implement and maintain a current Waste Management System Plan (WMSP) according to NRCS Standards and Specifications prepared by the SCD and signed by the District Conservationist and the applicant/operator. This must address all poultry waste generated on the farm. The WMSP must be farm-specific and agreed to by the applicant before funding can be approved for the proposed composter.
11. The applicant and the farm's Nutrient Management Plan must be in compliance with Maryland's Nutrient Management regulations (COMAR 15.20.08) at the time of Application. The NMP must be prepared for the specific farm and address all poultry wastes generated on the farm. The safe utilization of stabilized poultry mortality compost shall be addressed in the NMP for the farm. Nutrient Management Plan Certification form shall be submitted along with the Application as required (SECTION III, # 30).
12. Applicants are required to keep their WMSP and NMP updated and current throughout the maintenance life of any animal waste treatment or containment project. These updates are the responsibility of the applicant and landowners, and the SCD and/or nutrient management consultant may provide assistance. The SCD is responsible for verifying that the applicant has a current WMSP.
13. The applicant must agree to receive formal training from the University of Maryland, Extension (UME) in the proper operation of the composting facility as approved by MDA. If someone other than the applicant will be operating the composter, then that designated operator must receive the training. The applicant must sign the Poultry Mortality Composting Facility Training Certification (SECTION III, #10). The UME must certify to the Department that the applicant or designated operator has received the standard composter training within one year of the project being installed. If a disease outbreak causes training to be suspended, the Department may extend the timeframe for the applicant to obtain a certification of training with the understanding that the applicant will take the required class as soon as training resumes.
14. Except with regard to setbacks, NRCS Standards and Specifications for Poultry Mortality Composting Facilities (Code 316-I) shall be followed when applying this practice. MACS requires the location of the waste storage structures (including a PMCF) to be a minimum of 100 feet from streams, drainage ditches, and other surface waters, wells, and sinkholes. Exceptions may be allowed for constraints posed by the site and existing infrastructure. (SECTION III, # 11) No exceptions will be made for new operations. Expansions will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Justification identifying protective measures to maintain water quality must be included with the application.
15. The composting facility must be properly maintained and operated for a minimum of fifteen (15) years. The applicant agrees to provide all equipment, materials, and labor needed to meet this requirement.

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16. For a start-up operation or expansion to increase the animal capacity within the next six months, *and* if the applicant will document that fact in writing to the Department's satisfaction, cost-share may be approved for manure storage capacity based on the total new animal capacity on the farm. The SCD must document the animal capacity increase on the Certificate of Imminent Start-up or Expansion of a Poultry-Growing Operation form (SECTION III, #20) and submit this form with the MACS Water Quality Project form. *Start-up or expansion operations are eligible for 50% cost-share.*
17. MACS will initiate an On-Farm Status Review (Spot Check) six months following the completion of any project subject to the Certificate Imminent Start-Up or Expansion form.
18. If MACS cost-share funding was received for an Animal Waste Treatment and Containment Project and if supporting practices (367, 558, and 561) were not installed with the initial poultry mortality composting facility, the total eligible cost, not to exceed \$200,000 per project, is still applicable. The remaining balance of eligible cost-share can be applied towards the proposed Roofs and Covers (367), Roof Runoff Structure (558), and Heavy Use Area Protection (561).
- 19. MACS defines Animal Waste Treatment and Containment Projects to include Practice Codes 313, 316, 359, 367, 558, and 561 to solve a single water quality problem. The waste storage facility and supporting practices are part of a Waste Management System Plan (WMSP), and the total cost is not to exceed \$200,000 per project.**

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

1. A proposed PMCF *must* be one of the designs approved by the Maryland NRCS State Office to receive MACS funding. The facility must be built according to the design based on the normal flock size of the farm. If the farmer disagrees with the composter size recommendation that is based on the technical information available, then he/she may wish to construct a composter using alternative funding. *MACS grant funding is limited to use in accordance with existing technical guidance available from NRCS.*
2. NRCS standard composter designs include a roofed freestanding structure, a roofed design attached outside a PWSS, and an unroofed composter built inside a PWSS (restrictions apply; see above). Designs may be approved for a timber frame structure or for a steel framed structure.
3. The structure must be built according to the approved NRCS design, and no alteration or attachment to the composting structure is allowed unless approved by both the NRCS and MDA. *If approved, attachments to the structure (inside or outside) are at the expense of the applicant.*
4. The composting operation must be carried out properly and consistently with the detailed technical instructions provided by the UME and the NRCS.

COST-SHARE RATE

For Poultry Mortality Composting Facilities, the State cost-share payment will not exceed 87.5% of the total eligible cost, not to exceed \$200,000 per project, the maximum allowed for an animal waste treatment or containment project.

A farm cap limit of \$450,000 per person (within life maintenance, installed by the applicant or conveyed by the predecessor(s) in title) will apply.

ATTACHMENTS

Applicant(s) with an outstanding Unsatisfactory On-Farm Status Review of previous project(s) may be ineligible for MACS Cost-Share funding. When a previous project expires with outstanding unsatisfactory status, the applicant is ineligible for any future MACS funding.

1. A copy of a recorded deed(s) for the parcel(s) for the location of the BMP. If the current, appropriate deed is already on file in the MACS Office, then record both the Agreement # of the file where the deed is kept and the liber/folio numbers under the General Comments section of the Application.
2. A copy of the Real Property Data Search page from the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation's (www.dat.maryland.gov) indicating the Maryland Property View Account ID Number and owner information.
3. Aerial photograph indicating the property lines and existing and proposed BMPs. Include the distance of the proposed structure to the Waters of the State.
4. A plan view sketch graphically demonstrating the layout and details of the proposed BMP, including the location of existing/proposed structures and landscape features, including distance(s) (in feet) to streams and drainage ditches.
5. A current farm-specific Waste Management System Plan, which includes information on the site, problem, geographic area, NMP, system components, component details, waste utilization, installation timetable, and structure operation and maintenance, must accompany the MACS Water Quality Project Form. This document must be signed by the District Conservationist and the applicant and/or operator.
6. If an applicant and/or landowner applying for a PMCF has already received MACS funding for a PWSS(s) or another PMCF, then an On-Farm Status Review form for each of the PWSS's and/or PMCFs is to be sent with the MACS Water Quality Project Form.
7. Certification of Imminent Start-up or Expansion of a Poultry Growing Operation (SECTION III, #20) if applicable.
8. Nutrient Management Plan information shall be submitted along with the Application as required (SECTION III, #30).

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9. If the individual who is going to manage the composting facility is not the applicant, a Poultry Mortality Composting Facility Training Certification form (SECTION III, #10), must be signed by the cost-share applicant verifying certification of the designated operator.
10. Certification from the UME that the applicant or designated operator has attended the Composter Training Session. The applicant must sign the Poultry Mortality Composting Facility Training Certification (SECTION III, #10). This must be received by the MDA within one year of project completion. If a disease outbreak causes training to be suspended, the Department may extend the timeframe for completing the certification of training with the understanding that the applicant will take the required training class as soon as they resume.
11. MACS requires the placement of any Poultry Mortality Composting Facility (including a Waste Storage Structure) to be a minimum of 100 feet from streams, drainage ditches, and other surface waters, wells, and sinkholes. No exceptions will be made for new operations. Exceptions for existing operations may be allowed when constraints posed by the site and existing infrastructure prevent placement outside the 100-foot setback. Exceptions, including expansions, will be considered on a case-by-case basis. A SCD Certification for Exception form (SECTION III, #11) and identification of protective measures to maintain water quality must be included with the application.