



Code of Good Practice for End-Users of Poultry Litter

Legal Obligations and Good Practice Guidelines for End-Users of Poultry Litter as an Organic Fertilizer/Soil Improver

Poultry litter poses a risk of transmitting botulism to cattle. Outbreaks of botulism may occur, not just on the holding where the poultry litter is being spread, but also on neighbouring holdings. On that basis:

- **Poultry litter must not be stored on lands**
- **Poultry litter must be ploughed in (the sod turned over completely, surface tilling is NOT sufficient) immediately after spreading in a manner that keeps dust to a minimum.**

Persons intending to land-spread poultry litter (end-users) are obliged to comply with the requirements of the European Animal By-Products Regulations (Regulation (EC) No 1069/2009 and Regulation (EU) No 142/2011), European Union (Animal By-Products) Regulations 2014 (S.I. 187 of 2014) and the European Union (Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters) Regulations 2017 (S.I. 605 of 2017) when it comes to use of poultry litter as an organic fertilizer.

1. Transport of poultry litter

- i. Legal obligations and good practice guidelines for the transport of poultry litter are contained in a document entitled “Code of Good Practice for Poultry Litter Hauliers,” which can be found on the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) website using the following link:

<http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/animalhealthwelfare/diseasecontrol/botulism/>

2. Receipt of poultry litter

- i. End-users should only accept poultry litter from poultry farmers who have adequate systems in place to ensure poultry carcasses are removed from poultry houses and disposed of in accordance with the legislation.
- ii. Poultry litter containing dead birds **must not be land-spread.**



- iii. It is strongly advised that end-users check consignments of poultry litter being delivered to their premises for dead birds **before consignments are unloaded**. In the event that there are dead birds visible in the poultry litter, end-users cannot use the poultry litter for land-spread; thus end-users are strongly advised that they should refuse to take the consignment.
- iv. Similarly, if end-users see dead birds in the poultry litter while it is being unloaded, then the haulier should reload it and remove it without delay and the end-user must notify DAFM immediately.
- v. Poultry litter must be accompanied during transport by a commercial document. It is the responsibility of the person hauling the poultry litter to ensure compliance with this requirement.
- vi. The commercial document must be assigned a unique identifiable number and must be produced in quadruplicate. The original and a copy must be given to the person receiving the poultry litter; a copy must be retained by the poultry litter haulier and a copy must be left with the poultry farmer.
- vii. The end-user should sign and stamp a copy of the commercial document and return it to the poultry farmer to confirm arrival of the poultry litter in compliance with the European Animal By-Products Regulations. Return of commercial documents may be done via the poultry litter haulier.
- viii. The rules in relation to commercial documents also apply to consignments of poultry litter that are being removed from the premises of the end-user because they have been found to contain dead birds.

3. Storage of poultry litter

- i. Poultry litter must not be stored on lands prior to spreading and should be used without undue delay – same day as delivery or securely stored in accordance with iii below.
- ii. Every effort should be made to avoid the storage of poultry litter during warm weather.
- iii. In the event that poultry litter is being held for a short time prior to land-spreading, then it should be stacked on a concrete base away from rivers, streams and other water courses and any runoff should be collected. Storage of poultry litter and application to land should be in accordance with the European Union (Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters) Regulations 2017.
- iv. The stack should be put in a place where animals (including neighbour's animals) do not have access to it, nor can it contaminate livestock feed or bedding. The stack should be placed not less than 500m from either grazing or housed livestock production.



- v. The stack should be completely covered (in the same way as silage is covered) to prevent access by foxes, birds, vermin and other wildlife.

4. Measures to protect human health from risks posed by all manures

- i. Untreated animal manures contain high levels of pathogens some of which can cause disease in humans.
- ii. Unnecessary contact should be avoided and hands should be thoroughly washed after handling poultry litter.
- iii. Animal manures should not be used as an organic fertilizers on land used to grow crops, which are eaten raw by humans e.g. lettuce etc.

5. Use of poultry litter

- i. Utilization of poultry litter as an organic fertilizer must be carried out in compliance with the European Union (Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters) Regulations 2017.
- ii. Poultry litter should not be chopped prior to land-spread.
- iii. Poultry litter must not be stored on lands.
- iv. Poultry litter as with other organic manures must not be spread on land adjacent to water courses (a buffer zone of 5 metres must be maintained which is increased to 10 metres for the two weeks before and after the prescribed closed period).
- v. Poultry litter must only be spread on tillage land and not on grassland or land that is to be re-seeded into grassland.
- vi. Animals must not be grazed on lands on which poultry litter has been spread.
- vii. There should be a three-year interval between land-spreading of poultry litter.
- viii. Silage should not be made from any lands on which poultry litter has been spread.
- ix. End-users should advise any neighbours who have livestock of the days on which poultry litter will be spread so that neighbours can protect the health of their animals by removing them from adjacent fields.
- x. End-users should keep a careful eye on poultry litter as it is being spread. In the event that end-users spot carcasses of dead birds in the poultry litter while land-spreading, land-spreading must cease immediately, the carcasses must be removed and disposed of in the same manner as for all animals that die on farms, and the litter already spread ploughed in immediately (the sod turned over completely, surface tilling is NOT sufficient) and arrangements must be made to have the remaining litter



removed for disposal at a DAFM/EPA approved incineration or category 1 rendering plant. DAFM must also be notified immediately. Poultry litter may only be transported by hauliers who are registered with DAFM. Details of DAFM approved incineration or category 1 rendering plants and registered hauliers may be found on the DAFM website using the following link and clicking Section III and Section XIII:

<http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/agri-foodindustry/animalbyproducts/euapprovedabplants/>

- x. After spreading, lands should be checked for poultry carcasses. Any carcasses found must be removed and disposed of in the same manner as for all animals that die on farms.
- xi. **Poultry litter must be ploughed in (the sod turned over completely, surface tilling is NOT sufficient) immediately after spreading in a manner which keeps dust to a minimum.** Grazing animals should be removed from adjacent fields when poultry litter is being spread and ploughed in.

6. Records to be maintained

- i. End-users must keep copies of commercial documents for all consignments of poultry litter delivered to their premises. These commercial documents must be filed in date order and retained for inspection by DAFM officers for at least 3 years. Records of organic fertilizers taken in from outside own farm must be held for 5 years in accordance with the Nitrates Regulations.

7. Review

- i This document shall have effect as and from 1 March 2019 and shall be the subject of a review procedure 12-18 months following the date of issue.

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