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Back Yard Chicken Flock Manure Management Recommendations

With an increasing number of Prince William County residents raising small flocks of poultry, it is important that these poultry owners understand the proper means of managing the waste created by their birds. Manure from these birds is a valuable nutrient source for flower beds, gardens, and lawns. However, improperly handled poultry litter (the term for the mix of used bedding material and manure) can be a water quality hazard, and pose a health risk from bacterial contamination of fruits and vegetables.

-Do not apply fresh manure directly to plants or you may burn them.

-If possible, compost the manure bedding mix.

-If possible, use the deep litter method to bed your poultry.

<http://www.backyardchickens.com/web/viewblog.php?id=1560-DLM>

-Be sure to allow a minimum of 120 days between applying fresh manure to a fruit or vegetable garden and harvesting produce.

-Apply litter to gardens and flower beds in the spring or fall and incorporate into the soil.

-Do not store poultry litter in areas that are near waterways or areas that are subject to flooding.

-Design and situate litter composting/storage facilities in a manner that prevents precipitation runoff from transporting contaminants away from the site. See next page for setbacks.

Minimum separation distances recommended for manure storage and composting.

Sensitive area	Minimum separation distance (feet)
Property line	50-100
Residence or place of business	200-500
Private well or other potable water source	100-200
Wetlands or surface water (streams, ponds, lakes)	100-200
Subsurface drainage pipe or drainage ditch discharging to a natural water course	25
Water table (seasonal high)	2-5
Bedrock	2-5

Source: On-Farm Composting Handbook, NRAES-54

- Do not apply poultry litter to frozen ground.

-140# of composted litter per 1000 sq. ft. is a good rate to supply the nutrient needs for vegetable gardens and flower beds. If using uncomposted litter apply 45# per 1000sq. ft. and incorporate into the soil.

- Composted poultry litter may also be spread on lawns at a rate of 100# of composted litter per 1000sq. feet once per year. If one does not compost, fresh poultry litter can be spread on lawns at a rate of 30# per 1000sq. feet once per year. Applications to lawns are best done in the fall.