



**Steven W. Troxler**  
Commissioner

**North Carolina Department of Agriculture  
and Consumer Services**  
*Veterinary Division*

**R. Douglas Meckes, DVM**  
State Veterinarian

August 14, 2015

To Poultry owners/growers of North Carolina:

As you are aware, the current outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) is unprecedented in nature and has resulted in the loss of 50 million birds around the country. The North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) is committed to the preparedness and response activities which will best manage this disease; such activities will ensure effective, timely depopulation, will minimize the spread of the virus between farms, will result in the least environmental impact associated with disposal, and will allow our state's poultry owners/growers to return to business in short order.

There is potential for a disease outbreak in poultry with the return of migratory birds to North Carolina this fall and, that potential, necessitates unique guidance for disposal of HPAI affected poultry. NCDA&CS continues to recommend composting for disposal of litter, feed, and poultry, either in the house or outside of the house for layer operations; in fact, composting has been demonstrated to be the most effective manner to dispose of birds, to destroy the virus, and to eliminate spread of virus associated with the movement of dead poultry and/or house litter. Composting end-products are also readily and routinely managed in environmentally appropriate ways throughout the state.

However, NCDA&CS remains committed to considering all options and the burial procedures below will provide parameters under which burial may be considered. These burial guidelines have been developed in close collaboration with our partners in Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and NCDA&CS Division of Soil and Water Conservation. These procedures are based upon previous mortality disposal guidance and recent recommendations of DENR. It is important to note that the pre-incident site selection process, described below, must be completed prior to an outbreak of disease. There are state resources available to assist in this process; however, those resources are very limited so, attached, is a list of private service soil scientists who are also qualified to identify appropriate burial sites

on premises. There will be no site selection assessments conducted using state resources during a disease outbreak. Additionally, just as with composting, there will be on-site subject matter experts to oversee burial activities on every individual premise that has suitable sites and chooses to utilize burial for disposal.

The staff of the Veterinary Division, Environmental Programs and Soil and Water Conservation are available to answer questions and assist you, as we are able. Thank you for your cooperation in the face of this disease threat.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Douglas Meckes", is displayed within a light gray rectangular box.

R. Douglas Meckes, DVM  
State Veterinarian

RDM/slp