

MAY 12 1980 R

How to Build a Poultry Disposal Unit

Glenn Geiger and Joseph M. Vandepopuliere,
Department of Poultry Husbandry, College of Agriculture

A properly constructed poultry disposal pit is a convenient, sanitary and practical way of handling dead birds. The pit is an inexpensive disposal method. It requires little maintenance and can be used year-round. If the pit becomes filled, you can build another pit and the two can then be used on an alternate basis.

Location

Locate the pit on well drained soil, down slope and at least 300 feet away from the farm water supply, streams, and ponds. Avoid poorly drained heavy clay soils. For convenience, locate the pit as near the poultry house as practical.

Construction

Dig the pit at least six feet deep. You may want to use a bulldozer and backfill with dirt after the pit has been built. Use rough oak lumber or concrete blocks for the sides. (See construction details on the reverse side.) Use two-inch planks for framing and top. Use wood treated with preservatives to insure long life.

Cover the pit with two layers of two-inch boards. Let the boards extend at least a foot beyond each edge of the pit. Lay the second layer crosswise to the first.

Leave a 10-inch square inlet in the cover. Space an inlet every five feet along the top. Over the inlet, place a 10- or 12-inch bell tile. Cover planks with at least a foot of dirt, sloping off each side for good drainage.

Build a snug-fitting cover for the tile to keep in odor and to prevent dogs or other animals from knocking it off.

Size

The pit should take care of normal mortality. If you have heavy, unexpected losses, call the local rendering plant to remove dead poultry, or bury them in a separate unit.

Use the following table to figure the size of pit needed. (If you expect greater than normal mortality, increase the pit size in length.)

cubic feet required/1,000 birds		
Broilers	Commercial Layers	Market Turkeys
20	30	40

Example: If you have 10,000 broilers, you will need (10x20) 200 cubic feet in the disposal pit to take care of normal mortality. This would be a pit six feet deep, six feet wide, and six feet long (6'x6'x6'). For 30,000 market turkeys, you would need (30x40) 1,200 cubic feet. In this case, you may need several pits to provide the required space.

Operation

The use of lime or other materials in the pit is not necessary. Let nature take its course. The carcasses will decompose if nothing is added. Decomposition will be more rapid in summer than in winter.

Make a routine twice-a-day check for dead birds; dispose of them as they are found. Never let dead birds accumulate more than 24 hours before putting them into the pit.

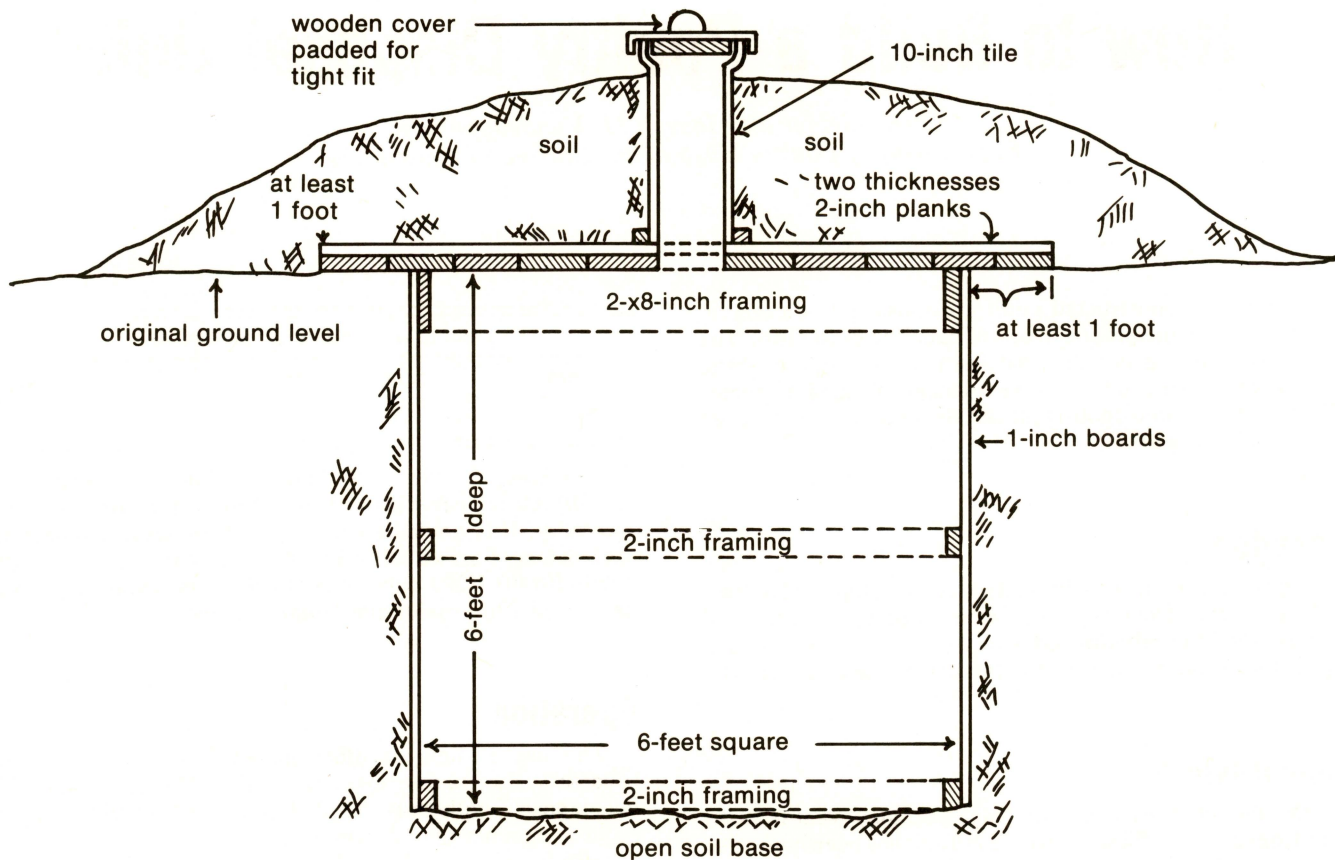
When a pit is no longer used, fill it completely with dirt to prevent accidents and exposure of decomposing carcasses.

Other Disposal Methods

There are other ways to dispose of dead birds. But any disposal method you choose should be an approved system and in compliance with current laws and local, state, and federal regulations. Check with your county's University Extension Center for information. Specialists there can help you select an approved method that best fits your needs.

Acknowledgments

Much of this information was adopted from publications by Purdue University, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, and Michigan State University. Walter D. Russell, Professor Emeritus, was the author of the original manuscript.



■ Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914 in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. Leonard C. Douglas, Acting Director, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Missouri and Lincoln University, Columbia, Missouri 65211. ■ An equal opportunity institution.