

A guide for Otago farmers when disposing of culled chicken and related waste impacted by avian influenza (AI).

August 2025

Introduction

This guide has been prepared for you by the Poultry Industry Association of New Zealand and Harrison Grierson.

Inside this guide you'll find information on:

- Disposal Options for your region
- **Best practice tips – what we recommend**
- General advice and recommendations
- Who to talk to if you have questions
- Regional and District Plan rules to consider

Recommendations

1. Onsite **offal pits** for all or most waste (if consent is not required)
2. Offsite disposal (**landfills**) for any remaining waste that exceeds offal pit limits
3. Disposal requiring consent – offal pits that contravene a rule or **composting**.

Estimates

We estimate the following volumes and weight for carcasses + litter + manure for 10,000 birds. This is important to consider when assessing disposal options.

Layer = 29t and 35m³ Broiler = 64t and 72m³

Onsite Disposal

1. What can go in an offal pit?

- ✓ Carcasses and animal material including eggs
- ✓ Compost bulking agent (manure)
- ✓ Other organic household waste
- × No other AI impacted waste such as litter, shed material, feed, bedding
- × Dairy sludge or septic tank sludge
- × Hazardous substances such as explosives or electronics

2. Estimate the volume

- Offal pit sizes are limited by District earthworks rules:
- Queenstown Lakes = 1000m³ in total volume and 5m deep
- Waitaki = 100m³ and 50m² in total area.
- Central Otago, Clutha and Dunedin Districts = no limits on volume

If you have a volume of waste that exceeds these limits, you will need to dispose of excess at an offsite landfill or consider another method of disposal.

3. Select and appropriate site

- ✓ Leachate must not enter water
- ✓ Ensure appropriate buffers (described over the page) are met
- ✓ No groundwater seepage into the pit. **At least 1m above the groundwater table.**
- ✓ **Elevated ground where surface water can be diverted away from the hole.**
- × Areas containing high value soils
- × **Poorly drained areas or areas prone to flooding or ponding during high rainfall.**
- × **Soils containing gravel and limestone**

4. Digging your pit

- ✓ Dispose of waste as quickly as possible.
- ✓ Install erosion, sediment and dust controls as needed.
- ✓ Restore the surface to a similar state as the surrounding land.
- ✓ Provide Regional Council with an accurate location of the offal pit
- ✓ **Cover waste with at least 1m of soil or temporarily cover with plastic and soil, until the hole is full and can be capped.**

Offal Pit Buffer Distances

	50m	100m
Waterway/waterbody – lake, river, artificial watercourse, modified watercourse, natural wetland or the coastal marine area, property boundary	X	
Water abstraction point		X

Composting

Considerations

- Composting will likely require resource consent. Obtaining consent may take many months. **Because of this, we recommend offal pit and landfill disposal be sought first.**
- Indoor composting should be sought. Outdoor composting may be impacted by rain and cold temperatures.
- The composting material must reach temperatures of 55 degrees Celsius
- Minimum 30 days to complete – this will increase the time until farmers can return to normal operation.
- Consider how you will dispose of or use the final product before you decide to compost – off-site use may be limited due to perception
- Specialised equipment and extra staff may be required.
- The MPI Composting Guide must be followed.

Offsite Disposal

Not all landfills will accept culled chickens or bird flu-impacted waste. The green boxed landfills below may be able to accept this waste (with adequate preparation).

Landfills will be responsible for obtaining their own appropriate consents or authorisations.

Disposal of this material at a landfill will incur additional costs on top of routine landfill costs.

Farmers should also consider transport costs.

AB Lime - Southland Regional Landfill

P: 02041132212 (Ansley Adams)

E: wastenet@icc.govt.nz

A: 10 Bend Road, Browns 9782

Kate Valley Landfill

P: 02108243882.

E: hleach@wm.nz

A: 554 Mt Cass Road, Teviotdale

Landfill Disposal Key Steps

1. Contact landfill operators

- Contact the landfill operator as soon as possible.
- Southern Regional Landfill requests at least two days' notice.
- Landfill operators will need to comply with the MPI Landfill Guide.

2. Estimate

The volume and weight of waste need to be estimated and supplied to truck and landfill operators.

The estimates provided offer a useful starting point, but farmers should calculate more precise figures based on the age and specific conditions of their population

3. Organize transport

- Trucks must be sealed and lined. Skips are sealed and won't need lining - just lidding.
- No leakage must be able to occur during transportation.
- Transporters will need to comply with the MPI transport guide

4. Submit Permitted Waste Application

- Applications to landfill facilities need to be made and approved prior to disposing of special waste. These cost from \$80+.
- Approval of applications depends on the level of detail provided up front.

General Advice

- If you want to dispose of waste in a way not described in this guide, please talk to a planner. Contact details are provided below.
- Resource consents – disposing of culled chickens is time-sensitive. We recommend disposal options that do not need a resource consent be sought first.
- If your chosen disposal option requires consent, we recommend you start the application process as soon as practical.
- Advice and recommendations may change – make sure this is the most recent version of this guide before taking action.

Council contacts

Council	Stream	Contact #	Email
Otago Regional Council	Planning	0800 474 082	consent.enquiries@orc.govt.nz
Central Otago District Council	General	+64 3 440 0056	info@codc.govt.nz
Clutha District Council	General	0800 801 350	help.desk@cluthadc.govt.nz
Dunedin City Council	Planning	03 477 4000	planning@dcc.govt.nz
Queenstown Lakes Council	Planning	Submit an inquiry on their website	
Waitaki District Council	General	03 433 0300	service@waitaki.govt.nz

Planning and environmental advice

Name	Role	Contact #	Email
Hali Hoskin (author)	Environmental Consultant	+64 9 2126468	h.hoskin@harrisingrierson.com
Mary McConnell	Planner	+64 21 721623	m.mcconnell@harrisingrierson.com

Attachment

Otago Regional Plans

Relevant regional rules for disposal of AI waste in Otago are summarised below. See the relevant plans and rules for full details.

Offal Pit disposal

The Operative Otago Waste Plan Rule 7.6.5 - Offal pits on production or factory farm states that:

1. *The discharge of any contaminant into or onto land;*
2. *The discharge of any contaminant or water into water; or*
3. *The discharge of any contaminant to air,*

When occurring as the result of an offal pit on production land or factory farm is a permitted activity provided that:

- (a) The accurate location of any offal pit on a factory farm is provided to the Otago Regional Council;*
- (b) It is dug in a manner so as to avoid groundwater seepage into the pit;*
- (c) It is not constructed within 100 metres, horizontally, of a well-used to provide water for domestic purposes or drinking water for livestock;*
- (d) Leachate from the offal pit does not enter any water body;*
- (e) It is not constructed within 50 metres, horizontally, of any river, lake, stream, pond, wetland or mean high water springs;*
- (f) Only dead animal matter and perishable household wastes are disposed of into the pit;*
- (g) No dead animal material originating from an industrial or trade premise (excluding a factory farm) is to be disposed of into the pit;*
- (h) It is not dug within 50 metres, horizontally, of a property boundary; or*
- (i) The offal pit does not cause a nuisance and is not noxious, dangerous, offensive, or objectionable beyond the boundaries of the property.*

Commentary

If the conditions of this rule can be met and no requirements are contravened. A consent may not be required. However, this should first be checked with the Regional Council.

District rules for earthwork volumes must also be considered.

Composting

The Otago Regional Waste Plan states that:

Adverse effects (odour, nuisance and leachate) can arise from composting, and for that reason it is desirable to require large scale composting operations to seek approval by way of a resource consent. Policy 7.4.4 Methods 4.5.4, 4.5.10 Rules 7.6.9, 7.6.10

Commentary

For this reason, consent will be required for composting of AI impacted waste.

Attachment

District Plans

There are no relevant rules for Central Otago nor Clutha District. Therefore, the size or volume of offal pits are not limited in these regions, provided the regional rule requirements are met.

Dunedin City District Plan

Earthworks

8A.5.1 Earthworks (Small Scale)

- a. Earthworks in the rural zones associated with burying material infected by unwanted organisms as declared by the Ministry for Primary Industries' Chief Technical Officer or an emergency declared by the Minister for Primary Industries under the Biosecurity Act 1993 are a Permitted Activity, given compliance with:
 - **8A.5.7** – Sediment Control
 - **8A.5.8** – Removal of High Class Soils
 - **8A.5.12** – Dust Control
- o Activities that contravene the performance standards are restricted discretionary activities.

Commentary

Earthworks must comply with the standards described in the rule, to be a permitted activity and not need resource consent.

Queenstown Lakes Proposed District Plan

Earthworks

25.3.2.11 – *Earthworks for the digging of holes for offal pits are a Permitted Activity, to a maximum volume of 1,000m³.*

Commentary

Earthworks without consent is limited to 1,000m³.

Waitaki District Plan

Earthworks

4.3.2.1 – Earthworks on any site which exceed 100m³ in volume or exceed 50m² in area and comply with the Site Development Standards 4.4.7 and 4.4.8 are a Permitted Activity.

Commentary

Earthworks without consent is limited to 100m³. For this district, offal pit disposal may not be an efficient disposal method.

Attachment

Resource Consents

A resource consent is not required for disposal at landfills.

If you are considering on-site disposal, such as burial or composting, you will need to assess if a resource consent is required. This attachment provides a summary of key steps for consenting.

We recommend that you seek disposal options that do not require resource consent in the first instance. Seeking consent can be expensive and time-consuming. It may take months to prepare, lodge, process and grant a consent.

Quick notes

A resource consent is formal permission from a council to undertake an activity that contravenes a rule. It is how councils manage possible effects on people and the environment.

- Poultry farms will often already have resource consent/s in place, possibly for: discharging wastewater, drawing water, constructing sheds.
- Both district and regional rules should be considered.
 - District consents – granted by district councils. Regarding land-use, development, noise, traffic and the built environment.
 - Regional consents – granted by regional councils. Regarding environmental effects – water, soils and air.
- If you contravene a rule, you may need a resource consent to undertake on-site burial or composting.

1.0 Review the rules

Before you choose your disposal option, you should assess the rules and consider if you contravene any. Relevant regional and district rules are included but not limited to those attached to this guide.

Both regional and district rules need to be considered.

It is best to check with a planner or consultant before you dispose of AI material on-site. They can check your assessment so that you can be confident you are operating with the proper approvals. Contact details are provided in the guide.

2.0 Contravene a rule

If you contravene a rule, you will need a resource consent.

You should consider contracting a planner to assist with the resource consent application process.

2.1 What consents may be required?

Consents that may be required include but are not limited to:

- District – earthworks, discharge to air (odour),
 - Regional – earthworks, discharge to air (odour), land-use (offal pits), discharge of contaminants to land where it has the potential to enter water. Some regional plans have composting rules.
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3.0 Contact the council

Either you or your planner will need to contact the regional and/or district council as soon as possible. Council contact details are provided in the guide.

1. Pre-application meeting – we recommend organising a pre-application meeting with the council. This will ensure that you are applying for the correct activity under the correct rule. The council can then flag any potential issues early.

2. Preparation of the application

A resource consent application will need to be made. This includes:

- Completed application forms
- Assessment of environmental effects
- Statutory assessment
- Notification assessment – are there any affected parties?
- Consultation assessment
- Rule assessment

4.0 Granting of the consent

Only once the consent application is lodged and then granted will you be able to undertake the activity for which consent is required.

You will be issued with consent conditions that you must comply with.

The council may undertake compliance monitoring, which would include a monitoring officer inspecting the farm before, during or after the activity. This may be to ensure that the consent conditions are being complied with.