

Managing poultry organic waste to prevent stable fly breeding

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What are stable flies and what harm do they cause?

Stable fly (*Stomoxys calcitrans*) is a blood-feeding fly with a painful bite. It is a pest of global significance, causing substantial economic losses to animal producers and negatively affects the wellbeing of people, pets and animals in surrounding communities.

Stable flies breed in decaying organic material, including animal manure, bedding and rotting vegetation. In warm conditions (around 30 °C and above), populations can increase rapidly, leading to heavy infestations (more than 20 flies per large animal). Impacts can be felt up to 20 km from breeding sites, as adult flies disperse in search of a blood meal.

High numbers of stable flies cause ongoing pain and stress to its host animals and people. Large grazing animals are the main hosts, but poultry can also be affected, with blood loss and stress leading to weight loss and reduced egg and meat production. Stable fly bites may also cause localised skin reactions and can transmit disease.

Stable flies pose a health risk for humans and poultry. They are carriers of *Salmonella*, *Pasteurella*, *Campylobacter* and *E.coli*, which can have a negative impact on poultry flocks and farm personnel.



Why is stable fly management important to keeping / growing poultry?

Stable fly is a declared pest under section 22(2) of the [Biosecurity Agriculture Management Act 2007](#) for 15 local government areas¹. Landholders in these areas must use the prescribed control measures strategies in the [Stable Fly Management Plan](#) to control stable fly breeding if it is on their land, or if it is likely to be present on their land.

Regular correct use of the prescribed control measures will reduce stable fly numbers and remove available breeding sites.

How to prevent poultry organic waste becoming a breeding site?

For successful management, the waste must:

- **not be** stockpiled for more than 7 days
- be kept **covered and dry**
- **be treated** with an approved insecticide²:
 - if piles of waste become wet, or
 - if you see stable fly eggs, larvae or pupae in the waste.

Using the prescribed control measures, particularly in the cooler months when stable fly life cycle development is significantly slower, can substantially reduce the number of adult flies emerging when the weather warms.

¹ Cities of Armadale, Swan, Kalamunda and Wanneroo and the Shires of Capel, Chittering, Gingin, Dandaragan, Harvey and Serpentine–Jarrahdale, the portion of the Shire of Murray described as the Peel-Harvey Coastal Plain Catchment - State Planning Policy No. 2.1, and Victoria Plains

Treatment of untreated poultry manure and associated organic waste

Untreated poultry manure (UPM) can be disposed of by the following methods:

1. **Used as fertiliser on non-irrigated pasture:**
 - UPM must be spread immediately on arrival onto non-irrigated pasture³
 - the maximum particle size after spreading is to be no greater than 20 mm.
 - the manure is to be spread evenly on the ground at no greater than 10 t/Ha dry weight
 - repeated applications of UPM must have at least 6 weeks between applications
 - if UPM is to be spread within 500 metres of a dwelling, written consent from the occupier must be obtained prior to use.
2. **Buried:** UPM can be deep buried more than 1 m (but see [Environmental Code of Practice for Poultry Farms in WA](#))
 - **Composted:** to prevent stable fly breeding either compost to the current Australian Standard 4454, blended evenly throughout the manure prior to removal from the production site

or

 - mix with sodium borate at not less than 0.5% per volume, blended evenly throughout the manure prior to removal from the production site

or

- mix with calcium cyanamide at not less than 1% by volume, blended evenly throughout the manure.

Details of composting treatment are to be documented.

Transport of untreated poultry manure and other organic waste

Consult with your local government authority to determine if permission is needed to store or transport untreated poultry manure.



Stack of untreated poultry manure in contact with soil and no protection from rain, will provide a perfect breeding site for 1000s of stable fly.

More information

dpird.wa.gov.au/stablefly

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² apvma.gov.au

³ Best practice – in warmer weather, avoid spreading manure when rain is likely.