



**Massachusetts Department of Public Health**  
Bureau of Environmental Health  
305 South Street  
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130-3597  
(617) 983-6700 (617) 983-6770 - Fax

## **Food Protection Program Policies, Procedures and Guidelines**

**Issue: The Use of Mobile Poultry Processing Equipment under USDA  
Exemptions as Outlined in the Poultry Products Inspection Act**

**No: FP-08**

Nationwide, there is a trend for sustainable community farming practices, including on-farm slaughtering. The purpose of this policy is to outline requirements for the use of approved mobile poultry processing units (MPPUs) in Massachusetts for the retail sale of poultry slaughtered on these mobile units. The policy outlines requirements for producers who use mobile units. MPPUs are being used in many States to safely process poultry products by small farmers and poultry producers. Producers using mobile units must comply with federal law regarding exemptions from continuous inspection by United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), as outlined in the *USDA Poultry Products Inspection Act*.

Streamlining local and state public health regulations and providing food safety support to small farmers is important to both farmers and consumers, while public health regulatory oversight is essential in the food safety system to verify safe food-handling practices and to maintain consumer confidence. For several years, the Massachusetts Food Protection Program, in partnership with other state and local agencies, studied the use of MPPUs in a pilot program. This policy document was developed as a result of the success of the pilot program.

### **Regulatory and License Requirements**

- All poultry producers producing poultry for sale must have a license from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH), Food Protection Program (FPP) to slaughter poultry as required by M.G.L. c. 94, section 120.
- The licensee must comply with all applicable sanitation requirements of 105 CMR 530.00, *Sanitation in Meat and Poultry Processing Establishments*.
- All producers using MPPUs must have local board of health approval to proceed with slaughter activities in their community (M.G.L. c. 111, section 151).
- MPPU operations are seasonal. Licensees may only operate from April 1 - November 30.

### **Training Requirement**

- In order to hold a license to use a MPPU, producers operating under a Poultry Act exemption are required to pass a state-approved training program.
- The state-approved training program is monitored by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR).
- Upon completion of the training, a certificate of training is issued to the producer by the MDAR. The certificate is valid for five years.
- After the five years, the producer must complete a refresher training program.

## Physical Requirements

- All MPPUs operating in Massachusetts for the purposes of slaughtering/processing poultry are required to be approved by the MDPH, Food Protection Program before operating to process poultry.
- All mobile units must have designated fixed equipment (including the killing cones, scalding, plucker, evisceration stations, and hand washing sinks) affixed to a trailer or mobile base.
- MPPUs may be open to the air or fully enclosed.
- MPPUs must contain, at a minimum, the basic equipment: killing cones, scalding, plucker, evisceration tables, cooling containers, drainage rack, packing table, and hand washing sink(s).
- Small equipment, including knives and thermometers, must be provided by either the MPPU operator or the MPPU user.
- Equipment must be easily cleanable and durable for the use intended.
- Stainless steel or galvanized metal is recommended for most surfaces.
- When processing, MPPUs must provide hot and cold running water at all times.
- In the event of unforeseen problems during processing, all MPPUs must have a source of back-up supplies for commonly used items, including gloves, knives, thermometers, hot water generator, and propane fuel.
- MPPUs shall operate in compliance with standards for waste water and solid waste disposal developed jointly by MDPH, MDAR, and Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP).
  - These standards include, but are not limited to, water use limits on the unit; collection of solid wastes and disposal to an appropriately sized compost area; collection of liquid waste with disposal to an appropriately sized compost area, or spreading on active, non-food crop growing field, or collection in a tight tank for pick-up by an approved waste hauler.
  - Point source discharge of liquid wastes is to be kept to a minimum.
  - The MDEP guidance statement for MPPU use limits the total number of poultry produced during one season on one farm to 2500 birds without triggering the need for a discharge permit.

## Record Keeping Requirements

- All MPPUs operators are required to develop and maintain a Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) plan for the processing operations of the unit.
- Poultry slaughtered by MPPUs must be obtained from distributors providing pullorum testing. MPPU operators are required to keep on file a pullorum certificate of testing from the supplier of their poultry stock.
- If using a private water source, MPPU operators must maintain on file an annual water test for coliform and nitrates.
- Operators using a public water supply are not required to maintain on file water test results.
- Processing records must be maintained by the producer for two years.
- Producers must maintain adequate records of customer information, in order that customers may be notified in case of a recall or a food emergency.
  - If adequate records of customers are not be maintained, during a recall or food emergency, a public notice or press release will be required.

## Operations

All operators using a MPPU to slaughter and process poultry must follow the *Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures* (SSOPs). These SSOPs are included in the document, “*MPPU Food and Farm Safety Management Guide for Small-Scale Poultry Producer Processors Using a Massachusetts-Inspected Mobile Poultry Processing Unit (MPPU) under Massachusetts Department of Public Health Licensure.*” This document was prepared by the New England Small Farm Institute and New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, and is part of the approved training program for MPPUs.

Basic components of the MPPU Management Guide include:

- temperature monitoring for poultry being processed,
- accurate record-keeping procedures, as required under the HACCP plan,
- required minimum numbers of staff per number of poultry to be processed,
- required number of pounds of ice per number of poultry being processed, and
- correct cleaning and sanitizing procedures for the unit.

In order to rapidly achieve required cooling temperature, the FPP recommends providing five pounds of ice per one chicken being processed (larger birds, such as turkey, will require additional ice). Chill tanks must remain at 40°F or below at all times. Seasonal variations in air temperature may increase the amount of ice needed for adequate cooling. The FPP recommends staffing levels for processing on the mobile units, at a minimum of two staff per every 50 birds being processed.

Poultry processed on MPPUs in Massachusetts may be offered for market only by retail sale. No wholesale distribution or wholesale sale of MPPU-processed poultry is allowed without a MDPH granted variance.

The number of poultry processed on mobile units is limited to 2500 birds per farm per season (consistent with Massachusetts DEP waste guidance document dated May 29, 2009, see Appendix).

Producers having a license to slaughter and process poultry using a MPPU will be routinely inspected by the Food Protection Program. As necessary, and as a standard procedure, inspections will include notice of violations. The noting of violations will require the submission of a Plan of Correction. A re-inspection may occur to verify corrective actions.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health may interpret any provision of this policy with respect to any particular case when, in its opinion, the enforcement thereof would do manifest injustice; provided, that the decision of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health shall not conflict with the intent of the policy and cause a risk to public health.



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
WESTERN REGIONAL OFFICE  
436 Dwight Street • Springfield, Massachusetts 01103 • (413) 784-1100

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Governor

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY  
Lieutenant Governor

IAN A. BOWLES  
Secretary

LAURIE BURT  
Commissioner

May 29, 2009

Judith Fuller Gillan  
The New England Small Farm Institute  
275 Jackson Street  
P.O. Box 937  
Belchertown, Massachusetts 01007-0937

Re: Belchertown  
Mobil Poultry Processing Unit (MPPU)

Dear Ms. Gillan:

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) in cooperation with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MassDPH) and Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MassDAR), have been working with you and others affiliated with the New England Small Farms Institute regarding the requirements for disposal of waste and wastewater from a Mobile Poultry Processing Unit (MPPU). MassDPH and MassDAR agreed to conduct closely monitored pilot studies with the MPPU during 2008 and 2009 to establish regulatory and operational criteria. The intended use of the unit, as discussed herein, is based on discussions with MassDEP personnel, results of several pilot trial operational runs and information provided by you and Ms. Jennifer Hashley. The intended use of the unit is travel to small farms to facilitate processing poultry for private or market sale on a small scale as follows:

- The proposed MPPU will travel to individual small farms and process poultry raised or owned by the same farmer.
- The proposed unit does not use water during the evisceration (dry evisceration); however water is used for rinsing the eviscerated carcass, scalding/chilling the birds and the pre- and post-processing cleaning/rinsing of the unit.
- The unit will be sanitized during the pre- and post-processing cleaning by hand spraying disinfectant and wiping down surfaces followed by rinsing. This method is proposed to minimize the use of large volumes of cleaning material and rinse water to clean the equipment.
- The amount of water generated during processing and cleaning will be on average 1 to 2 gallons per bird processed. The maximum processing capacity of the unit is approximately 300 birds per day.

This information is available in alternate format. Call Donald M. Gomes, ADA Coordinator at 617-556-1057, TDD# 866-539-7622 or 617-574-6868.

DEP on the World Wide Web: <http://www.mass.gov/dep>

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- The anticipated maximum number of sites visited by the unit per day will be two small farm locations.
- The anticipated maximum volume of water generated is 400 gallons if the MPPU is located at a single site on a given day and processing up to 300 birds.

MassDEP has determined that your proposal for the management of waste materials and the scalding, chilling and rinse water from the MPPU, as described above, is acceptable to MassDEP provided that the following conditions are met:

1. The maximum amount of water generated at any given small farm shall not exceed 400 gallons on any given day (*Based upon a conservative estimate of 1-2 gallons of water per bird processed and a maximum of 300 birds per day*). MassDEP notes that metered data from the trial runs during 2008 used on average 150 gallons per day for processing approximately 180 birds.) This 400 gallons maximum amount of water may be generated at a single location so long as the farm's actively managed compost pile and the active growing land (to be irrigated) can accommodate such volume as verified by MassDAR (or MassDPH) during the farm inspection.
2. The unit shall be used at a maximum of two small farms on any given day and adequately cleaned before moving off of each site.
3. A compost area shall be used to dispose of the waste offal, feathers and all water used during processing that contains solids. Water used in the chilling bins shall be disposed of in the compost pile unless MassDAR has verified that a growing field is available and adequate to accept the water from the chilling bins.
4. MassDEP will rely on MassDAR (or MassDPH) to inspect the compost pile and management of the compost, during the initial flock inspection at each facility. Each facility shall obtain written confirmation from MassDAR verifying that the size of the compost pile (used to dispose of the waste offal, feathers and all wastewater that contains solids), site management of the compost and the size of the growing field, for the disposal of chilling water, meet the standards set forth in the MassDPH Food Protection Program, Mobile Poultry Unit Checklist. MassDEP's requirements contained in this checklist is attached and incorporated into this approval as Appendix A. [Best Management Practices (BMP) for Waste Management (Water, Offal, and Inedible Parts)]. These requirements shall be complied with.
5. Any discharges to an active compost pile shall not cause the effluent to migrate beyond the boundary of the compost pile.
6. If MassDAR assesses and confirms the adequacy of the actively growing field, the chilling water may be disposed through land application. If however, MassDAR does not assess the size of the active growing field, all wastewater generated during the processing and chilling must be disposed of in the compost pile.

If the adequacy of the active growing field is assessed and confirmed by MassDAR, the chilling water may be land applied with a spray hose, as irrigation water, over an active growing field during the natural growing season. Under no circumstance, shall the entire contents of the

- chilling bins be allowed to empty in one location by opening the bung and allowing the water to drain.
7. The MPPU shall not be used on each small farm more than 4 times per month during any given active growing season for processing purposes; the unit shall not be stationed at the same physical location on the same farm more than 2 times per month; and no more than 2,500 birds shall be processed at any single farm per season.
  8. The unit shall be utilized during the active growing season only.
  9. No harsh cleaning and disinfectant chemicals shall be introduced into the rinse water.
  10. MassDEP recommends that you, the unit owner, verify that the disposal method at each farm meets the requirements set forth in this approval prior to contracting with the facility.
  11. The rinse water generated during the pre-process or final post-process cleaning may be allowed to flow to the ground provided that the unit is located in an area where runoff will flow to an actively growing grass area and will not cause erosion or to impact surface water, groundwater or other resource areas.
  12. The rinse water from cleaning contact surfaces such as tables, plucker and scalders, during and immediately post-processing that is likely to contain solids (offal and feathers) shall be disposed of in the compost pile.
  13. Every effort shall be made to capture and control wastewater that may have solids and blood during processing and the initial post-process cleaning. Modifications should be considered, to both process and/or construction of subsequent units, to improve efficiencies.
  14. Each owner of a MPPU shall notify the Western Regional Office of MassDEP and the Regional Office of MassDEP where the unit owner is located, of its intent to use or offer for use the unit and shall provide the name, address and telephone number of the owner and the location where the unit will be housed.
  15. MassDEP may, at its sole discretion, revise and/or revoke this approval. MassDEP will notify the affected parties, the owner(s) of the unit, of its decision to revise and/or revoke this approval.
  16. Any farmer that anticipates exceeding the thresholds set in this correspondence shall contact the undersigned at the Western Regional Office of MassDEP, prior to exceeding the threshold, to determine if a permit is required for the operation.
  17. Any farmer who intends to bring from off-site, onto his/her farm, materials to be composted, shall first register with either MassDEP or MassDAR.

Farmers should contact representatives of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service for advice and assistance in nutrient management on their farm as necessary. The web site to locate the closest regional office of the USDA is:

- [http://offices.usda.gov/scripts/ndCGI.exe/oip\\_public/USA\\_map](http://offices.usda.gov/scripts/ndCGI.exe/oip_public/USA_map).

If you have any questions, please contact me at 413-755-2131 or Catherine Skiba at 413-755-2119.

Sincerely,



Saadi Motamedi  
Section Chief  
Compliance and Enforcement  
Bureau of Waste Prevention

CC: MassDEP Regional Offices, MassDEP Boston Office