EFSA Panel on Biological Hazards (BIOHAZ); Scientific Opinion on Composting on-farm of dead poultry - DTU Orbit (16/12/2018)

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EFSA’s Scientific Panel on Biological Hazards (BIOHAZ) was asked for a scientific opinion on two alternative methods for processing Category (Cat) 2 Animal By-Products (ABP). The material to be treated consists of poultry manure, straw and dead-on-farm poultry; this implies that the animals died due to a disease, which in most cases was not properly diagnosed. The proposed processes are composting methods to be used on-farm. The first method is a continuous open system where composting is done under roof in piles separated by wooden partition walls. The piles are processed without enforced aeration. The second method is a discontinuous closed system consisting of two different types of containers (Box-Compost®) coupled with a device for conditioning temperature and humidity during composting (Compostronic®). The end-product obtained is intended to be used as an organic fertiliser. According to the legislation in force, before being used as an organic fertiliser, Cat. 2 material should be treated with a sterilisation process (i.e. 133°C / 20 min / 3 bars / 50 mm particle size). The BIOHAZ Panel concluded that the identification and characterisation of the risk material was not properly addressed in the application and a comprehensive list of possible hazards was not provided. No experimental validation with representative test-organisms under practical conditions was done. Because of a lack of information in the report, it was not possible to determine the degree of risk reduction of pathogenic bacterial, viral and parasitological agents achieved by the processes. Moreover, the proposed alternative method cannot be considered equivalent to the sterilisation process defined in the current legislation.