

# Polluted chicken muck piling up in The Netherlands

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Tonnes of chicken muck contaminated with a banned insecticide are piling up in hundreds of Dutch poultry farms hit by the tainted-egg scandal, officials said Wednesday.

"Poultry farmers, who are already on the edge of a financial abyss, don't have any way of getting rid of the contaminated manure," said Hennie de Haan, president of the Dutch Poultry Farmers association (NVP).

More than two months after the tainted-egg crisis erupted and Dutch officials closed down poultry farms where the banned substance fipronil was found in their eggs, farmers are still waiting to get rid of the chicken muck.

It is proving a headache as the manure cannot be treated normally but must be burned by two specialised businesses, which have been overwhelmed with the amount of work.

"The situation is becoming unmanageable. Farmers are on the edge of bankruptcy and feel they have been totally abandoned," De Haan told AFP, adding one temporary solution could be to stockpile the poisonous poo in huge warehouses.

"The farmers haven't received one centime in aid since the start of the crisis," she added.

Millions of eggs were pulled from supermarket shelves and destroyed across Europe and dozens of poultry farms closed after the fipronil contamination was made public on August 1. The scandal even reached as far as Hong Kong.

Commonly used to get rid of fleas, lice and ticks from animals, fipronil is banned by the European Union from use in the food industry.

De Haan said 267 poultry farms remained closed in the lowlands country, and at least 3.2 million contaminated chickens have been culled.

Two Dutchmen, who ran a company believed to have been behind the

use of the insecticide, were arrested in the case on August 10.

On Wednesday, they were finally bailed and released from jail to await trial.

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