 Farms are under increased pressure to control odor and contaminants from manure. This is particularly important for poultry manure, which is high in nitrogen content. State regulations require all concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) to have an Agricultural Waste Management Plan. Implementing these plans requires new investment to manage manure and may potentially increase energy usage on farms.

Kreher’s Poultry Farms is a large egg farm in Clarence (Erie County) with over 500,000 hens and is designated as a CAFO. At Kreher’s the poultry manure is collected in a dry collection process, but needs further drying and stabilization to prepare it for marketing as a fertilizer substitute.

This project, a full-scale composting operation, is being demonstrated using windrows of lighter-colored fresh manure that are converted into a brown granular product. This is accomplished by frequent turning in an automatic turning machine that runs along the bays separating the windrows in the composting building. Innovations in the turning machine were developed based on experience gained from a smaller composting operation at the farm. These innovations were found to be successful in making good product, and the compost turner previously used in the smaller building has been retrofit to the new style.

The remainder of the project includes the documentation of energy and economic impacts of the new operation, and transfer of the findings to others in the New York State agricultural community.