percent of our parent-stock farms have gone out of production. The selling price per chick has gone down from Tk. 20 to Tk 5-6. In addition the government was not, until recently, providing ample compensation for those farmers that have to destroy their farms."

Hasan agrees that the production of poultry was half of what it was a year ago. "Before, seven million chickens were produced every week, and now the number has gone down to four million and it will keep on reducing," he says. "This is a big disaster for the industry and the reason that the collapse has happened is that people are consuming less chicken and also that the farmers are not keeping chicken. It's okay for the bigger companies because they are able to invest in other industries, but the smaller farms have no other source of livelihood. The industry and the farmers are terrified because regardless of whether their farms are safe, if the farms in their area are affected there is a high chance that their farms will also be destroyed as well, just because they had the bad luck to be in that area."



Wastes from infected fowls need to be disposed of properly so that other birds and animals do not contract the views. Photo: Star



Dead crows are being randomly found in places all over the country creating panic among the public. Photo: Star

Haque predicts that sooner or later, these small farms and the open houses will no longer be allowed because they cannot be maintained, especially if the government enforces biosecurity regulations for all the poultry farms in the country. "These small farms do not have the facilities and the consultation to be able to realise how to manage disease control," says Haque.

Biosecurity, or the concept of a controlled environment house, will ensure that a highly protected environment will be maintained, "in which people will have to disinfect themselves by showering and changing before both entering and leaving the farm areas. In addition the farm will have to have dedicated rickshaws and even bags for the sole use of that particular farm," says Hasan. "It's a very expensive process which the breeders can afford but the smaller farms cannot manage to do."