



For Immediate Release

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Poultry Industry Statement on Pew's 'Report'

America's broiler chicken companies and the 30,000 farm families that grow broiler chickens are committed to the responsible production of food that is safe, affordable and abundant for consumers in the United States and around the world. In contrast to Pew Charitable Trust's well-known antipathy towards poultry farmers, the industry is more diligent and innovative than ever in pursuing environmental improvements. The fact that Pew seems to be unaware of the scope of environmental progress underway in the poultry community is evidence that this report is little more than a cheap shot at a responsible business.

- The report's critique is terribly misplaced, and once again demonstrates Pew's bias against modern farming practices. The poultry community has already taken meaningful steps to further reduce nutrient impacts on the environment. The sources of nutrients into the Chesapeake Bay and other watersheds are ubiquitous. EPA acknowledges the positive steps agriculture has implemented in reducing its environmental footprint in the Bay region, even as the nutrient contribution from non-agricultural sources continues to grow.
- Using Virginia as an illustration, all the poultry litter in the state produces about 11,000 tons of nitrogen and 5,400 tons of phosphorus that is largely utilized as fertilizer on cropland. In contrast, synthetic chemical fertilizer utilized in Virginia contains almost 10 times more nitrogen (110,000 tons of nitrogen) and over 5 times more phosphorus (28,000 tons of phosphorus). Further, much of the synthetic fertilizer usage is on urban/suburban lawns not subject to the same tight regulatory oversight as agricultural producers.

- Modern practices and technology utilized by the poultry industry are vital to environmental sustainability, as the industry uses less water, energy and other resources to deliver nutritious products to consumers in an increasingly competitive global marketplace.
- Poultry litter is a valuable commodity in farming communities. It contains essential crop nutrients, returns organic matter to the soil, and helps crops weather droughts.
- Poultry farmers have been advancing effective control of nutrients for more than a decade, assisted by credible USDA and EPA-recognized best industry practices. Formal “nutrient management plans” for farmers are also required by state and federal environmental regulations. These plans ensure a balance between nutrients applied and the nutrients required by crops.
- Poultry farmers who have more litter than necessary for their own farm usually sell this valuable commodity to other farmers, who use it as a valuable organic fertilizer in place of commercial fertilizer. The use of this natural fertilizer reduces the farmer’s carbon footprint by returning carbon to the soil and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Poultry litter contains organic nutrients whose characteristics allow it to more effectively bind to soil. This reduces the possibility of nutrient run-off from the cropland.
- The 30,000 family farms and companies in the poultry community are involved in many different aspects of sustainability including animal welfare, recycling and waste reduction, worker safety, and community concerns. The Pew report fails to capture the true picture of the contributions we’re committed to making today and in the future.
- For more information on how the U.S. poultry industry raises its animals sustainably and economically, please see the new video “Raising Chickens and Turkeys...for Today and Tomorrow” by visiting the following website: <http://www.poultryegginstitute.org/training/>. The video can also be viewed on YouTube at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8cVzxY6Enbg>

Focus on the Chesapeake Bay Region:

Poultry farmers and companies continue to do their part in helping to restore the Bay. Over the last decade, the poultry industry in the Bay has implemented numerous proven conservation and best management practices. As a result of these and related practices in the broader agriculture sector, EPA in a recent report acknowledged that agriculture’s contributions of nutrients to the Bay were decreasing, not increasing, versus other sectors. Some of the highlights of progress in this critical watershed include:

- Growers have spent millions of dollars to install heavy use area pads to minimize or totally eliminate litter from being deposited outside their houses during removal of the birds or during litter/manure clean-out.
- Virtually every poultry farm utilizes covered storage buildings to protect manure from rain and storm water runoff.
- Growers recycle litter/manure within chicken houses between flocks through a process called windrowing. This practice extends litter life while dramatically reducing the amount of nutrients removed and applied to the land.
- Trials are underway to evaluate existing equipment that allows litter/manure to be injected of beneath the surface of the soil to prohibit migration of nutrients from field application areas.
- At least one major facility is processing chicken litter into pelletized organic fertilizer to be shipped to distant crop areas. This facility has removed thousands of pounds of nitrogen and phosphorus from the Chesapeake Bay watershed.
- All chicken farms on the Eastern Shore of Virginia have state-issued Virginia Pollution Abatement Permits, in line with the federal Clean Water Act and state statutes. 567 of the approximately 800 chicken farms on the Eastern Shore of Maryland have federal permits as required by the Clean Water Act or state permits as require by the Maryland statute. Of the approximately 800 chicken farms in Delaware, 368 are permitted and more are expected by the end of the year.
- The states of Maryland and Delaware monitor the transportation and relocation of poultry litter.
- In 2010, the Maryland chicken manure transport program relocated over 45,000 tons of manure from chicken farms where it could not be used to companies or persons that could utilize its nutrient value.
- In 2010, the Delaware chicken manure transport program relocated roughly 108,000 tons of litter. The 8 year total for manure relocated through the Delaware manure transport program is more than 600,000 tons.
- Perdue AgriRecycle Inc. has voluntarily moved over 23,000 tons of manure.
- Ellis Farms Inc., a broker and manure transporter, relocated 9,000 tons without relocation assistance.

According to the Chesapeake Bay Commission, roughly 14% of the nitrogen and 8% of the phosphorus pollution to the Chesapeake Bay can be traced back to urban and suburban nonpoint sources. In comparison, the December 2010 Watershed Implementation Plan generated by Maryland indicated, chicken manure is responsible for just 6% of Maryland's total nitrogen contribution to the Bay.

About U.S. Poultry and Egg Association

U.S. Poultry & Egg Association (USPOULTRY) is an all-feather organization representing the complete spectrum of today's poultry industry, with a focus on serving member companies through research funding, education, communication, and technical assistance. Founded in 1947, USPOULTRY is based in Tucker, GA.

About the National Chicken Council

The National Chicken Council represents integrated chicken producer-processors, the companies that produce and process chickens. Member companies of NCC account for more than 95 percent of the chicken sold in the United States.

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