



Delmarva Land & Litter Challenge:

Win-Win Pathways for Agriculture and the Peninsula's Waterways

Through the new Delmarva Land & Litter Challengeⁱ, a diverse group of organizations representing grain producers, chicken growers, poultry integrators, conservationists, academic partners; along with agribusiness, finance and service providers are joining forces and collaborating in a new way forward for managing poultry related nutrient pollution on the Delmarva Peninsula. Together they have committed to provide catalytic leadership in accomplishing the following outcomes and goals:

Delmarva farmers and their agri-business partners are respected stewards of the land, guardians of natural resources and champions of the rural cultural heritage in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. By 2025:

- ***Delmarva farming and poultry complex becomes a national model as an environmentally friendly and economically sustainable regional agricultural system;***
- ***Delmarva agriculture is regionally neutral in importing and exporting nutrients, and wherever possible, nutrients are recycled locally to support sustainable agricultural operations;***
- ***Nutrients are utilized in farming operations without negative environmental impacts on land and in adjacent waters; and,***
- ***Growers are rewarded for producing high value food, feed, fiber, clean energy, and ecosystem services.***

Despite the substantial progress that has been achieved over the past five years in reducing poultry nutrient pollution, much work remains to be done to accomplish the goals that have been established for the peninsula. In support of these efforts, the ***Delmarva Land & Litter Challenge*** is uniting stakeholders, who have often been at odds over strategies and pathways for achieving water quality and habitat goals, in an epic quest to achieve a new future- a future where healthy and productive bays, rivers and streams across the peninsula are underpinned and supported by a vibrant and sustainable agricultural economy.

This large landscape initiative, covering 5.45 thousand square miles, will require unprecedented, communication, collaboration and cooperation among the project partners. It will also require a new way forward for addressing water quality challenges from animal agriculture operations, as the policies and practices of the past will not meet the needs of tomorrow.

The ***Delmarva Land & Litter Challenge's*** efforts will be focused primarily along two pathways- ***responsible land application of animal manure and litter and alternative uses and markets for manure and poultry litter***. Initial work areas will include the formation and empowerment of multi-stakeholder action teams and partnerships; efforts to harmonize frameworks for addressing nutrient pollution challenges across multiple jurisdictions; the establishment of financial reward

mechanisms for stewardship of ecosystem services; energizing and coordinating research; and transforming and modernizing information networks.

Delmarva Land & Litter Challenge initial deliverables include:

1. A **multi-stakeholder, landscape scale, shared leadership platform** where stakeholders addressing nutrient pollution from animal agriculture operations can work across county, state and watershed boundaries, and design and deploy better integrated, and more uniform policies, programs, practices, and projects;
2. An action plan for establishing and funding an **innovation support program** on the Delmarva Peninsula dedicated to animal agriculture nutrient management support;
3. Create a methodology and **calculate the nutrient mass balance** for nitrogen and phosphorous on agricultural lands on Delmarva; and
4. Propose ways manure/poultry litter transport programs can be improved, streamlined and made more “user friendly” while also ensuring environmental improvements.

Confirmed Partners:

Chesapeake Bay Commission
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Chester River Association
Delaware Department of Agriculture
Delaware Farm Bureau
Delaware Nutrient Management Commission
Delaware-Maryland Agribusiness Association
Delmarva Poultry Industry, Inc.
Harry R. Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology
Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts
Maryland Farm Bureau Federation

Maryland Grain Producers Utilization Board
Maryland League of Conservation Voters
Mid Atlantic Farm Credit
MidShore Riverkeeper Conservancy
Mountaire
Natural Resource Conservation Service
Perdue Farms
State of Maryland (Chesapeake Bay Cabinet)
Sustainable Chesapeake
The Nature Conservancy
Tyson Foods, Inc.
Virginia Secretariat of Agriculture & Forestry
West/Rhode Riverkeeper
Willard Agri-Service

Delmarva Land & Litter Challenge partners believe that significant progress can be achieved in meeting the nutrient reduction goals that have been established for the agricultural sector. Working together they are committed to supporting pathways for land management that will improve the health and productivity of agriculture and the Bay, while strengthening the economy that preserves and protects the region’s rural cultural heritage. All stakeholders who embrace the ***Delmarva Land & Litter Challenge*** goals are invited to join in this grand collaborative to achieve these outcomes.

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ⁱThe Delmarva Land & Litter Challenge is a self-directed project operating under the wing of Solutions from the Land, a 501 (c) (3) organization focused on land based solutions to global challenges.