



November 19, 2019

Media Contact: Paula Jasinski
(804) 824-3945
Paula@GreenFinStudio.com

Delmarva Collaborative Releases Educational Products Around Chicken Farming

Easton, Maryland – A forum of diverse partners working together to address challenges and identify solutions around chicken litter management on Delmarva officially announces a change to its name, along with the release of two new products.

The Delmarva Land and Litter Collaborative (DLLC), formerly the Delmarva Land and Litter Challenge, today is releasing an online storyboard for the public that aims to educate citizens and provide data as a starting point for conversations about the Delmarva chicken industry.

DLLC also has released a report that provides methods to analyze the mass balance of nutrients on Delmarva. This report was written with a collaborative approach among DLLC members and partners and identifies gaps in data needed to have an accurate accounting of chicken litter in each Delmarva county in order to better inform management practices.

“These products were designed through a collaborative approach to develop a common understanding of the data that is available so that we can all work from a factual baseline knowledge of Delmarva’s chicken industry,” said **Jeff Horstman, Past DLLC Chair and Director of ShoreRivers**.

From a “Challenge” to a “Collaborative”

DLLC members represent a wide variety of interests in Delmarva’s chicken industry — from agricultural groups and producers, to environmental organizations and nonprofits, to academia and government agencies from Maryland, Delaware and Virginia.

Founded in 2015, DLLC supports solutions for land management that will improve the productivity of agricultural lands, protect water quality in the local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay, and strengthen the economy to preserve and protect the region’s rural and cultural heritage.

“The initial ‘challenge’ was, to a large extent, simply bringing together such diverse interests to work together on solutions to these important issues. Since we’ve met that challenge, ‘collaborative’ now better reflects the DLLC,” said **Kurt Fuchs, DLLC Chair and Senior VP of Government Affairs, MidAtlantic Farm Credit**. “Becoming a ‘Collaborative’ represents DLLC’s transition as an organization and reflects our consensus-building approach among our diverse membership.”

Storyboard

The storyboard, “Exploring Chicken Farming on Delmarva,” is an effort not only for public education but to create common ground and a starting point for diverse audiences to discuss the chicken industry on Delmarva. The online tool describes the changing landscape of agriculture and chicken production on Delmarva, comparing and contrasting local trends to those occurring at a national scale within the chicken industry. The storyboard explores related topics, including population, environmental management, and the production, efficiency and economics of chicken farming.



The “Exploring Chicken Farming on Delmarva” Storyboard is available online.

“Our goal is for people to see the data all in one place so they can gain a better understanding of the changes in population, development and the chicken industry on Delmarva over the past 30 years,” said **Bill Massey, DLLC member and VP of Live Operations, Mountaire Farms.**

Chris Bason, Executive Director for Delaware Center for the Inland Bays and DLLC member, stated: “Anyone living on Delmarva has wondered about the growing poultry industry and its effects on our lives. This fascinating display of data paints a picture of an expanding industry that has undergone an efficiency revolution on the fields and in the houses. The most visible indicator to the general public confirms that the number of poultry houses has indeed dropped over the past few decades while the capacity of the houses overall has increased - a sign of consolidation reflected throughout the industry. “

Mass Balance Methods Report

The Mass Balance Methods report is the culmination of three years of collaborative research among representatives from academia, agriculture industry, state and federal government agencies and environmental non-profits. The diverse group worked diligently to develop detailed methods for an assessment of agricultural inputs and outputs of nitrogen and phosphorus on Delmarva. The process required a consensus agreement on every dataset, assumption and recalculation. Ultimately, a final value could not be determined but the methodology and understanding of data needs have provided value to the research community.

“Performing a nutrient mass balance on a large geographical scale requires many datasets and mathematical methodologies. We look forward to having a regional framework that was developed by diverse stakeholder groups on Delmarva to use as a guide for our future

calculations. From this report, the agreed-upon methodologies can be used in various geographical areas to estimate potential nutrient surpluses or deficits,” said **Mark Reiter, Associate Professor, Virginia Tech Eastern Shore AREC.**

“One key outcome from this process was a renewed commitment by DLLC to identify opportunities and overcome barriers to the transport and use of poultry litter in regions of the Delmarva where farmers are primarily relying on commercial fertilizer. Because of the joint effort of a diverse seventeen-member workgroup coming together to identify the data sources, data gaps, methods and assumptions, we have a clearer path forward to revising the mass balance as new data becomes available.” said **Kristen Hughes Evans, DLLC Vice Chair and Executive Director of Sustainable Chesapeake.**

###