

Extending Knowledge - Changing Lives

Poultry Farm Management for New and Existing Growers

Training for Delaware growers on best management practices, ventilation basics and regulation

ISSUE

In recent years, the Delaware Nutrient Management Program has experienced a surge in the number of new poultry growers seeking education to comply with state law. This trend was echoed in recent local media coverage of Delmarva's expanding poultry production. With so many new poultry growers, some new to agriculture, a need exists to educate growers on production basics, best management practices as well as state and federal regulations. Today's poultry grower needs to be aware of available tools that assist a productive farm, but also minimize environmental risks.

RESPONSE

University of Maryland and University of Delaware offered a training with Delaware specific information regarding best management practices, ventilation basics, and regulations. The program was taught by Delaware and Maryland personnel; continuing education credits were offered to those seeking to comply with state required education. This program provided production information on brooding, bird welfare, composting, litter management, financial management and vegetative buffers.

IMPACT

Following the program, an evaluation was given to participants.

- 75% (18) of program participants indicated they learned something new about the Delaware Nutrient Management Law
- 66% (16) of participants indicated they would change how they maintain and implement best management practices on their farm following the program
- 71% (17) of program participants indicated that they would change how they ventilate their poultry houses
- 58% (14) indicated that they would change how they manage bird welfare, composting and mortalities on their farm

One participant commented, "It was really educational. These sort of programs should take place on a regular basis to educate farmers, especially new ones." Based on evaluation responses and class participation, this training provided new growers with a source of basic information that was well received.

This all-day program was sponsored by Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit.