

Poultry Waste Management Education and Electronic Litter Market Protect the State's Most Valued Water Resources

There are more than 700 poultry farms in eastern Oklahoma producing more than 250 million birds and 200,000 tons of waste annually. Concerns about phosphorus in the waste polluting important water resources prompted the state of Oklahoma to pass the Registered Poultry Feeding Operations Act in 1998 and the Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension Service Poultry Waste Management Education Program to educate more than 2,000 poultry operators and waste applicators.

To address water quality concerns associated with improper or excessive land application of poultry litter, OSU Cooperative Extension Service provides poultry production operators and poultry waste applicators with an initial nine-hour series of PWM educational sessions followed by three hours of continuing education each year (Annual Update Education).

Since 1998, more than 2,000 participants have earned PWM certificates from OSU. In 2006 alone, OSU Extension educators offered the initial nine-hour training sessions 12 times, attracting 223 new operators and applicators to the certification process.

Initial PWM sessions cover basic training on regulations, animal waste management plans, nutrient management, sampling and calibration procedures, conservation practices and poultry litter marketing. Annual Update Education keeps operators and applicators abreast of the latest knowledge and practices for poultry production and environmental protection.

During 2006-2007, OSU Cooperative Extension Service developed 13 new presentations. Annual Update Education consisted of 144 classroom and field instruction hours in calendar year 2006, and participants completed more than 5,860 hours of training. Two classes were designed specifically for Southeast Asian American poultry producers, with a Laotian translator present.

OSU Cooperative Extension Service also developed the Oklahoma Litter Market Web site to assist with the transfer of poultry litter to areas of need and away from nutrient surplus areas. The Web site, www.ok-littermarket.org, assisted substantially in promoting the transfer of poultry litter out of Western Arkansas and Eastern Oklahoma to areas where the nutrients would be needed and utilized.

The OSU Cooperative Extension Service Poultry Waste Management Education Program continues to thrive, led by Josh Payne, Area Animal Waste Management Specialist. For further information, visit the PWM Web site, www.poultrywaste.okstate.edu or contact Payne at joshua.payne@okstate.edu or 918-686-7800.