



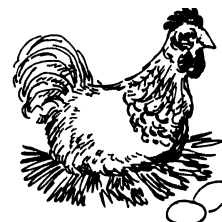
The University of Georgia

**Cooperative Extension Service**

College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences / Athens, Georgia 30602-4356

MAY 2003

## COMMERCIAL EGG TIP . . .



### FEDERAL CAFO RULES FOR HIGH RISE LAYER OPERATIONS

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has recently released the new changes to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program. Under the previous permit requirements, only poultry operations with liquid manure or continuous flow watering systems were subject to NPDES permits. As anticipated, dry litter poultry operations have now been included in the permitting program. This changes means that high rise layer operations with manure pits may now be required to obtain a permit. EPA has established threshold limits for each livestock and poultry species based on phosphorus excretion rates. Operations that exceed these threshold limits are required to obtain a permit. For dry manure layer operations the threshold level is 82,000 hens. Operations with hen numbers between 25,000 and 82,000 hens may be required to obtain a State of Georgia Land Application System (LAS) permit once the state has finalized their changes to the permit program. This is currently under consideration by Georgia EPD.

#### **What's new with the CAFO permit:**

1. Documented nutrient management plans (NMP) that address best management practices for nutrient storage and application, mortality management, and erosion control. Plans need not be written by a certified planner.
2. Setback distances of at least 100 feet are required between waters of the U.S. and CAFO production facilities and land application of manure. If a vegetative buffer is in place, the setback may be reduced to 35 feet.
3. Mandatory manure testing at least once a year and soil testing for phosphorus every 5 years.
4. Record keeping becomes an essential component of the permit program. Maintaining records of manure generation, use, and transfer are required. An annual report must also be submitted to the authorized permitting authority, which in the State of Georgia is the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) of the EPA.

#### PUTTING KNOWLEDGE TO WORK

The University of Georgia and Ft. Valley State College, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and counties of the state cooperating.  
The Cooperative Extension service officers educational programs, assistance and materials to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability  
An equal opportunity/affirmative action organization committed to a diverse work force..

5. Nutrient management planning activities for CAFOs will need to consider phosphorus where risk of phosphorus contamination of water is high. Use of a phosphorus index tool will help evaluate phosphorus risk factors on individual operations. Those CAFOs that are assessed a very high risk of potential phosphorus contamination will be required to develop and implement a NMP based on phosphorus application. CAFOs that are not considered high risk will be able to continue with nitrogen-based plans.

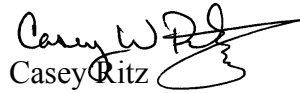
**While We Wait For The State To Make Its Changes:**

1. Implement a nutrient management plan on your farm. Nutrient management planning demonstrates a conscientious and pro-active approach toward the environmental stewardship of all poultry operations.

2. Utilize the no-cost manure testing services through the University of Georgia Extension Service while they are still available. Knowing the nutrient status of your manures and soils will help you make more accurate decisions regarding your nutrient management planning activities.

3. If you currently think you will need to obtain a permit, wait for the State of Georgia to finish making changes to the permit program before applying. The combination federal and state permitting program will likely be completed and ready for implementation by October 2003. NMP and permits must then be in place by December 2006.

Nutrient management plans for poultry operations of all shapes and sizes will continue to play an important role in the future of the poultry industry. If you need assistance with your nutrient management program, contact your local county extension agent.



Casey Ritz  
Extension Poultry Scientist

Extension County Coordinator/Agent

\*\*Consult with your poultry company representative before making management changes.\*\*