



*The University of Georgia*

**Cooperative Extension Service**

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## ***BROILER TIP . . .***



### **NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE**

Several years ago (1999) the University of Georgia began conducting training and informational programs across the state of Georgia related to the development and implementation of nutrient management plans for poultry growers. These programs were developed in response to concerns regarding the potential of poultry operations to contribute nutrient contamination to the state's water supply. The primary issues of concern revolved around the lack of formalized programs that would assure the appropriate, handling, storage, application and documentation of poultry litter/manure utilization on farms. To address these aspects of nutrient management, University of Georgia Extension Service developed a training manual entitled "*Guidelines and Procedures for the Implementation of Poultry Nutrient Management Plans*". These manuals were reproduced and distributed by poultry companies during the training sessions held around the state. The major components of the poultry nutrient management plan are listed below:

#### **Key Components of a Nutrient Management Plan**

1. Soil and Litter Sampling and Analysis
2. Computation of a Field Nutrient Budget to Determine Application Rates
3. Proper Handling and Storage
4. Methods for Preventing Soil Erosion and Water Contamination
5. Proper Methods of Dead Bird Disposal
6. Procedures for Documentation of the Program

To date, more than 3800 individuals have attended these sessions, and as a result, more than 5000 litter samples have been submitted to the lab for nutrient analysis. It is estimated that over 70% of the poultry farms in Georgia have submitted litter samples for analysis at this time. We do not know how many individuals have completed nutrient management plans, but we do know it is important to continue implementing and documenting these programs. If you have not received training or need assistance completing your nutrient management plan, please contact your local county extension agent.

#### **Future of the Program 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.  
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To this point these programs have been implemented on a “voluntary” basis for dry poultry manure operators. The purposes of the voluntary program were to demonstrate a pro-active approach to those critical of the use of poultry manure as a fertilizer and to ensure the appropriate use of this material on all our poultry farms. In addition, poultry producers wanted to avoid unnecessary and overly restrictive state regulations. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) are keeping an eye on the progress of these voluntary programs and will be considering new CAFO regulations for Georgia this year.

EPA proposes new CAFO regulations. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently released its new CAFO Guidelines. As expected, the new CAFO Guidelines include large poultry operations regardless of the type of manure management system. EPA is currently defining a “large” broiler operation as one having a capacity of 125,000 birds or more. Poultry CAFOs are required to be permitted by the authorized state agency (EPD in Georgia) and are required to have documented nutrient management plans, carry out best management practices, keep records on third party vendors, and submit an annual report to the state permitting authority. The important issue here is that the Georgia DNR Board could decide to require even more stringent regulations than those recommended at the Federal level if deemed necessary. Thus, the importance of continuing with the voluntary programs to demonstrate the conscientious and pro-active approach of poultry producers.

The New Rule does not include mandatory national co-permitting requirements, requirements that plans be prepared by a certified planner, requirements manure recipients be certified, or mandatory national requirements regarding manure application to frozen or saturated ground.

### **Nitrogen and Phosphorous Based Plans**

EPA is requiring the consideration of phosphorous in the development of nutrient management plans for all CAFOs. The purpose is to reduce the potential for phosphorous contamination of water from high risk poultry CAFOs. The voluntary program in Georgia has been nitrogen based but will incorporate the use of a phosphorous index beginning in 2003. The phosphorous index is a tool developed by University of Georgia scientists to evaluate farms that may be high risk operations for contamination with this nutrient. A farm assessment in the very high risk category would require development and implementation of a nutrient management plan based on phosphorous application and utilization. Those operations not considered to be a very high risk situation, would continue to work from a nitrogen-based plan.

### **Follow-up Programs**

As we progress into 2003 and assist the DNR Board in the development of new CAFO regulations, the Department of Poultry Science will provide up-dated training and informational meetings for Georgia’s poultry producers as needed. Nutrient management plans for poultry producers remain a critical component for the continued success and future of poultry farming in Georgia. If we work together we should be able to address these issues reasonably without the necessity of overly restrictive governmental regulation. Remember, if you need help with your nutrient management program please contact you local county extension agent.

  
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