Avian Influenza
Protecting Your Flock’s Health

- Keep unnecessary people off of your farm and out of the poultry houses
  * Lock doors
  * Use fences and signs to keep people away

- Do not allow visitors in or near the poultry houses

- Growers and employees should keep clothing (including shoes, boots, hat and gloves) separate from those worn off the farm
  * It can also be beneficial to have a set of boots for each house that never get outside of the chicken house

- Never visit any other poultry farms
  * Employees should not have other poultry at home

- After work, change clothes completely and wash hands and arms before heading home

- Hunters or others who come in contact with wild birds should change clothes (and shoes) and shower before returning to work, this is especially important when coming into contact with waterfowl

- Keep wild birds and pests out of the chicken houses
  * Keep end doors shut between flocks
  * Have a good rodent and insect control program
  * Maintain vegetation and no debris around the houses
  * Clean up feed spills

- Essential visitors must wear protective clothing, including boots and headgear, before being allowed near the birds
  * Keep some protective clothing on hand for when problems arise
  * Have a place to dispose of clothing when visitors leave

- Monitor who comes on the farm

- Clean and disinfect all equipment before it is allowed on the farm and again as it leaves

- Remove and properly dispose of dead birds
  * Poor disposal can lead to disease and increase the number of flies and scavengers

- Growers should contact their flock supervisor immediately if high mortality is experienced
  * Sick or dying birds should be sent to a state laboratory for diagnosis
  * Do not visit other farms or places that growers frequent if experiencing high mortality
With avian influenza causing huge problems in chicken and turkey flocks on America’s West Coast and in the Midwest, efforts continue to enhance the Delmarva Peninsula’s chicken industry biosecurity, update the prevention and response plans, and ensure the necessary resources are in place to deal with this potentially devastating disease in our chickens. As of mid-June, there had been 221 detections of avian influenza in America since December 2014 with more than 47 million birds affected.

Delmarva Poultry Industry, Inc. (DPI) has been working with the state and federal departments of agriculture, the five chicken companies, the local universities, and other interested persons and organizations to make sure we are prepared.

The Delmarva emergency response plan has been revised and persons are being recruited to serve in the leadership positions in the Incident Command System that will guide how we respond.

DPI has been updating our inventory of chicken farm locations that will be used by the Incident Command System to map virus-positive and surrounding farms to quarantine them and to develop focused response plans. DPI will be in charge of the mapping team.

If we have a case, DPI will have a prominent role in the communications efforts.

Planning exercises are in the works and there has been training on depopulation methods. The Delaware Department of Agriculture has taken delivery of another foaming unit to work on farms just in case.

Two examples of getting ready are the set of biosecurity reminders recently issued by the University of Maryland and University of Delaware and the university-sponsored workshops held in June.

An opportunity is available to help Delaware chicken growers improve energy efficiency on their farms. In collaboration with the Delaware Sustainable Energy Utility, you might be able to secure up to $400,000 through Energize Delaware’s Low Interest Loan program towards the installation of efficiency measures. There is a special fixed interest rate of 2%. Loans payments are based on cash positive financing. You will never pay more than the money you save each month.

Energy efficiency upgrades that can be funded through the Energize Delaware include, but are not limited to:

- LED lighting
- Radiant heaters
- Building envelope (including insulation and solid sidewalls)
- Ventilation systems
- Motors and pumps

The application process is said to be simple and a representative from the EnSave company will be available to help growers through each step of the process - from application through implementation. Call 800-732-1399 or visit [http://www.ensave.com](http://www.ensave.com) to take advantage of this opportunity.

Created in 2007, The Delaware Sustainable Energy Utility is a unique non-profit organization offering a one-stop resource through its Energize Delaware initiative to help residents, businesses, and chicken growers save money through clean energy and efficiency.
On-Farm Poultry Freezer Technology
Now Available on Delmarva

Alternative to Composting is More Cost Effective, Better for Bio-Security, Great for the Environment and Now Eligible for Cost-Share Funding

Poultry growers in other regions of the country have been using on-farm freezer collection units for more than 20 years, and now the practice is positioned for widespread adoption on the Delmarva Peninsula.

Federal and state nutrient management agencies in Delaware and Virginia recently designated freezer units as a best management practice (BMP) that is eligible for cost-share funding.

In fact, the first group of farms approved for financial assistance are being notified this month by the Delaware Office of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Funding is provided through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

“We continue to expand nutrient management options for landowners and operators in the State as they become available through the latest approved scientific methodologies,” said Kasey L. Taylor, NRCS State Conservationist. “We look forward to ensuring Delaware producers are able to address their resource concerns in the most effective way possible through innovative conservation practices.”

On-farm freezer units are an approved nutrient management practice in all three states, but financial assistance is only available for growers in Delaware and Virginia at this time.

The Maryland Department of Agriculture is currently considering adding freezer units to its cost-share program, so Maryland growers should contact their legislators and sign a petition – the link is available at the bottom of the page of the following website: www.greener-solutions-llc.com.

The system is simple. Routine mortality is placed inside a specially designed collection unit available for purchase from local ag equipment retailers. A customized collection vehicle arrives during layout to empty the units. Routine maintenance of the unit is provided as part of the collection service offered by Greener Solutions, the company that introduced this new option to the Peninsula.

Growers have been able to greatly reduce the time and money they previously spent on composting, realizing thousands of dollars a year in operational savings.

“For us, it’s a great management tool,” said Brent Willin of State Line Farms near Seaford. “The guys can pick up the birds, open the lid and throw them in. … The last time we touch the birds is when they drop into that freezer … it’s a really nice process,” he said.

Another benefit of freezer collection units is better bio-security. By using sealed containers that lock in pathogens and lock out scavengers and flies, growers can reduce their risk of loss.

Nonmonetary benefits include the elimination of the smells, flies, and scavengers associated with composting, so the grower and neighbors enjoy a greatly improved quality of life.

“Bottom line – we want more freezers [for our other two farms] … it’s really worked out for us,” said Willin, who recently shared his experience during a presentation at Delaware Ag Week, which you can view at: www.greener-solutions-llc.com/how-it-works/.

Greener Solutions’ mission is to promote the sustainability of the poultry industry by developing and offering low-cost alternative practices with positive environmental impacts. The company serves growers, breeders and laying operations across Delmarva. To learn more about products and services, visit www.greener-solutions-llc.com or call 844-754-2742.
There has been an increase in chicken house construction in Maryland and that is related to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) animal feeding operations program (AFOs). This includes new poultry houses and manure storage sheds on existing and new chicken farms. The Maryland Department of the Environment wants to assure that this construction is in compliance with state and local environmental laws, regulations, and permits. This includes not only requirements after the construction is over, but also during the planning and design of the AFO before construction begins. Here is an MDE-developed checklist of important precautions, permits, and resources for information:

Pre-construction

- **DO NOT** try to fit more structures on a field than can legally fit;
  - New poultry structures should not be located less than 100 ft from surface waters of the State (public ditches, tax ditches, streams, rivers, ponds, lakes, tidal and non-tidal wetlands, and public drainage systems);
- **DO NOT** adjust the location of the structures from the approved plans without re-approval from all signoffs;
- **DO NOT** start construction before receiving all approvals including, but not limited to, the following:
  - **General Permit for Stormwater Associated with Construction Activity** issued by MDE’s Water Management Administration (WMA). Contact WMA if the project will disturb one acre or more of earth. See MDE webpage at [http://go.usa.gov/gFMW](http://go.usa.gov/gFMW) or email mde.constructionswnoi@maryland.gov;
  - **Erosion and Sediment Control Plan** approved by the county Soil Conservation District. Contact your local district office;
  - **Storm Water Management Plan** approved by local county department of public works or equivalent agency. Contact your local agency; and
  - **Waterway Construction Permit** (if located within the 100-year non-tidal floodplain); contact Bill Seiger at 410-537-3821 or william.seiger@maryland.gov.
- **SUBMIT** an NOI for the **General Discharge Permit for Animal Feeding Operations** at least three months prior to receiving birds. Contact Gary Kelman at 410-537-4423 or gary.kelman@maryland.gov;
  - Make sure that you write “new construction” on the NOI; and
  - Develop a required plan (**Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan** or **a Nutrient Management Plan** plus a **Soil Conservation Water Quality Plan**) to complete the AFO general discharge permit application.
- **CONTACT** MDE’s Water Supply Program if you will need additional water to support the new poultry houses to determine whether or not you need a **Water Appropriation and Use Permit**. Call the Water Supply Program at 410-537-3714.

**During Construction**

- **CHECK** on the progress of the **General Discharge Permit for Animal Feeding Operations** registration (issued by MDE, Land Management Administration; contact Gary Kelman at 410-537-4423 or gary.kelman@maryland.gov);
- **MAKE SURE** that contractors follow **Erosion and Sediment Control Plan** and the terms and conditions in the **General Permit for Stormwater Associated with Construction Activity**.

**After Construction**

- **FINISH** all site work before receiving birds;
- **TERMINATE** the **General Permit for Stormwater Associated with Construction Activity** when the site meets the final stabilization requirements. To terminate, revisit MDE webpage at [https://egov.maryland.gov/mde/npdes Account/Login](https://egov.maryland.gov/mde/npdes Account/Login) and
- **DO NOT** receive birds until registered under the **General Discharge Permit for Animal Feeding Operations**. Contact Gary Kelman at 410-537-4423 or gary.kelman@maryland.gov.

This checklist covers a lot of required items and the timing of each requirement may vary from farm to farm. For questions, contact Gary Kelman.