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POULTRY NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT AWARENESS PROGRAM FOR GROWERS

At the request of the poultry industry, an awareness program for nutrient management was developed and delivered for contract poultry growers throughout the state. This program was planned through a multi-disciplinary group, the Water Quality/Nutrient Management Task Force, which is a comprehensive research and extension task force composed of extension specialists and researchers.

The program focused on the following major topics:

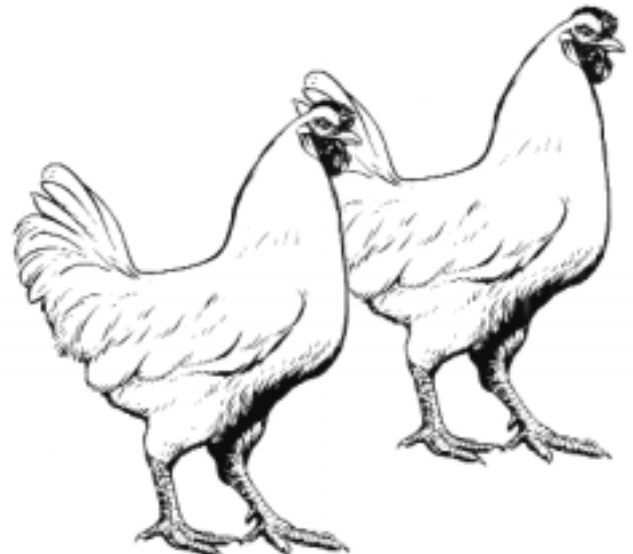
- ✂ Utilization of poultry waste nutrients in forage production.
- ✂ Nutrient management regulations in poultry (where we have been, where we currently are, and where we are going).
- ✂ Components of Nutrient Management Plans for poultry.
- ✂ Poultry nutrient management planning processes (including NRCS's phosphorus management guidance document and use of the phosphorus index to determine whether nitrogen or phosphorus is the critical limiting nutrient).
- ✂ Alternative uses of poultry litter, especially as a cattle feed for beef producers.

The overall program was developed, then followed, by an agent in-service training program. A special communication plan was developed for use by agents and specialists in communicating availability of training to poultry producers. Following the in-service training, 12 individual poultry trainings were held in the poultry-growing central and southern parts of the state between May 11 and June 1, 2000.

WORKSHOP EVALUATION

A total of 297 evaluations were received from more than 300 poultry growers who attended these workshops. The evaluation instrument documented the high value of the information and satisfaction by participants, and in addition, identified needs of poultry growers.

A summary of evaluation information indicated that, overall, the workshops were valuable to poultry growers



because their knowledge was increased and the information provided would help in the management of their operations in the following key workshop topics:

Workshop Topics	% and (number) Agreeing That Knowledge Increased	% and (number) Agreeing That Farm Management Improved
Water Quality	98 (174)	92 (163)
Nutrient Management	95 (171)	89 (156)
Regulations	96 (172)	87 (155)
Crop Management	95 (166)	87 (151)
Phosphorus Index	92 (166)	84 (151)
Feeding Broiler Litter	93 (158)	82 (135)

In addition, 82 to 98 percent of the growers agreed that the information taught in the workshops was needed (improved farm management) and not previously known by the growers (increased my knowledge).

Growers identified key sources of information. Most received their information about farm enterprises from Extension (55.2 percent). The other sources were 50.3 percent from NRCS, 36.1 percent from integrator, and

24.6 percent from DEQ. Two-thirds (62.4 percent) indicated they preferred the workshop format followed by printed information (56.5 percent).

GROWER PROBLEMS

Growers were asked to list their top three problems and those that Extension could address. The chart below shows their responses:

Problems	% and (number) Growers Responding	% and (number) Growers Needing MSU-ES Assistance
Nutrient Management & Poultry Waste Disposal	46 (37)	44 (18)
Environmental	13 (11)	7 (3)
Business Management	12 (10)	5 (2)
Feeds and Feeding	10 (8)	15 (6)
Integrator/Grower Relations	9 (7)	2 (1)
Poultry Health	6 (5)	7 (3)
Educational Materials & Meetings	4 (3)	20 (8)

Ninety-nine percent of the respondents indicated they would like information from Extension.

This publication is a joint effort of the Mississippi State University Extension Service and the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station.

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