

Response to Pew's "Big Chicken" Claims

July 28, 2011 - The Pew Environmental Group's July 26 report attacking the poultry industry shows that the unfair biases the organization revealed during development of 2008's "Putting Meat on the Table: Industrial Farm Animal Production in America" have only intensified.

The Animal Agriculture Alliance Coalition, coordinated by the Animal Agriculture Alliance, was formed in the summer of 2006 to engage with the Pew Commission on Industrial Farm Animal Production (PCIFAP). The Coalition sought to work closely with the PCIFAP to ensure its members and staff had a full understanding of food animal agriculture in the U.S. Despite a pledge to an open and public process, the final half of the Commission's work was done behind closed doors. The initial draft of the Commission's final recommendations was created *before* the supporting technical reports were even completed.

Pew has made no secret of its opposition to contemporary animal agriculture. The unsubstantiated claims promoted in "Putting Meat On the Table" suggest that the Pew Commission ignored the scientific research it funded in favor of the opinions of committee members who believe they should be able to determine the future of animal agriculture in the United States. **(Learn more about the Pew Commission on Industrial Farm Animal Production [here](#).)**

This week, Pew's "Reforming Industrial Animal Agriculture" campaign was at it again, blaming the problems of the Chesapeake Bay region solely on poultry farmers in "Big Chicken", a new report. It ignored the contributions of human waste, despite that according to the Chesapeake Bay Commission, roughly 14 percent of the nitrogen and 8 percent of the phosphorus pollution to the Chesapeake Bay can be traced back to urban and suburban nonpoint sources. In comparison, the Maryland's December 2010 Watershed Implementation Plan indicated that chicken manure is responsible for just 6 percent of the state's total nitrogen contribution to the Bay. The total volume of waste water that accompanies human sewage dwarfs the volume produced by animal agriculture. **(Learn more [here](#).)**

In response, the National Chicken Council and U.S. Poultry & Egg Association shared ways that poultry farmers are working to promote a healthy Chesapeake region:

- *All chicken farms on the Eastern Shore of Virginia have state-issued Virginia Pollution Abatement Permits, in line with the federal Clean Water Act and state statutes. 567 of the approximately 800 chicken farms on the Eastern Shore of Maryland have federal permits as required by the Clean Water Act or state permits as require by the Maryland statute. Of the approximately 800 chicken farms in Delaware, 368 are permitted and more are expected by the end of the year.*

- *The states of Maryland and Delaware monitor the transportation and relocation of poultry litter.*
- *Virtually every poultry farm utilizes covered storage buildings to protect manure from rain and storm water runoff.*
- *Growers recycle litter within chicken houses between flocks through a process called windrowing. This extends litter life while dramatically reducing the amount of nutrients removed and applied to the land.*
- *Trials are underway to evaluate existing equipment that allows litter/manure to be injected of beneath the surface of the soil to prohibit migration of nutrients from field application areas.*
- *At least one major facility is processing chicken litter into pelletized organic fertilizer to be shipped to distant crop areas. This facility has removed thousands of pounds of nitrogen and phosphorus from the Chesapeake Bay watershed.*
- *In 2010, the Maryland chicken manure transport program relocated over 45,000 tons of manure from chicken farms where it could not be used to companies or persons that could utilize its nutrient value.*

(Read the poultry industry's full response to the new report [here](#).)

America's poultry producers have shown time and time again their commitment to innovation while meeting the nation's need for a safe, affordable supply of poultry products. Farmers and ranchers continuously strive to maintain and improve their production practices to protect the well-being of consumers, their animals, and the land. **To learn more about modern poultry farms, view video tours of poultry farms and interviews with poultry farmers [here](#).**

About the Alliance:



The [Animal Agriculture Alliance](#), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is a broad-based coalition of individual farmers and ranchers, producer organizations, veterinarians, scientists, suppliers, packer-processors, private industry and retailers. The Alliance's mission is to communicate the important role of animal agriculture to our nation's economy, productivity, vitality, security and that animal well-being is central to producing safe, high-quality, affordable food and other products essential to our daily lives.