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## **Poultry Litter: A Valuable Resource for Virginia Farmers**

It will soon be the time of year when many farmers take advantage of an outstanding resource available in Virginia: poultry litter. To farmers with crop, pasture, and hay land, this product, which consists of turkey or chicken manure and bedding (wood shavings or peanut hulls), is a valuable, organic source of plant nutrients, and it is an excellent soil amendment to improve soil quality. Farmers who have not used poultry litter in the past should consider it. Historically, poultry litter has helped transform marginal land into highly productive farmland. The following are some programs designed to promote the use of poultry litter:

- **VPF Poultry Litter Hotline** – This is a toll-free number (**1-888-433-2451**) for people trying to buy or sell poultry litter. Poultry growers may call this number and leave their contact information and how much and what type of litter they have available. Farmers seeking litter may call the same number and leave their contact information. The hotline operator will provide callers with a list of poultry litter brokers, whom they can contact to buy or sell litter. This list is available online at [www.vapoultry.com](http://www.vapoultry.com). In addition, the VPF makes available to poultry litter brokers our list of growers with litter and farmers seeking litter. The intent is to match growers up with farmers seeking litter.
- **Poultry Manure Spreader Grant Agreements** – The VPF has entered into grant agreements with local farm bureau organizations in Louisa, Madison, and Fauquier counties to enable farmers in those areas to rent a manure spreader for spreading Virginia poultry litter. To sign up for the spreader, please call the following:
  - **Madison County Farm Bureau** – (540) 948-3311
  - **Louisa County Farm Bureau** – (540) 967-1370
  - **Fauquier County Farm Bureau** – (540) 347-3172
- **Cost-Share Funds Available** – Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and Virginia Poultry Federation offer a poultry litter transport incentive program to facilitate the efficient use of poultry litter as a crop nutrient source in areas that most benefit from those nutrients. The aim is to encourage development of self-sustaining poultry litter markets in areas outside of the main poultry producing counties. Through the program, assistance is provided at the rates of \$5 or \$12 per ton of litter to help cover additional transportation costs. For more information, visit [http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/soil\\_and\\_water/nmlitter.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/soil_and_water/nmlitter.shtml) or call DCR at 540-332-9222.
- **Proper Management** - Poultry litter should always be managed properly in accordance with conservation practices. For information on state regulations governing poultry litter management, contact Betsy Bowles of Virginia Department of Environmental Quality at 804-698-4059.