

## **Special Funding Available for Poultry Mortality Management in Kent County, Delaware**

Dover, Del., November 19, 2020 – Approximately \$161,000 is available to help beginning farmers in Kent County implement conservation practices to address animal mortality management on their poultry operation. Financial assistance is available through a program led by the Kent Conservation District, in cooperation with their public and private partners, for the implementation of best management practices (BMPs) such as composters or mortality freezers to address routine mortality.

Beginning farmers are faced with significant startup costs, and there is a backlog of applicants waiting for approval through financial assistance programs for composters or mortality freezers, poultry manure structures, and heavy use area protection pads. Proper mortality management is critical to prevent leaching of nutrients, spreading of disease, and the attraction of vermin.

Beginning farmers must meet the eligibility requirements of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) administered by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Beginning farmers interested in implementing a composter or mortality freezers are encouraged to contact the Kent Conservation District office at 302-608-5370 to sign up for this program.

In addition, Farm Freezers LLC and Greener Solutions LLC are offering a \$100 rebate per freezer unit purchased through this program along with a collection fee rebate of \$100 per flock for one year after installation.

A “beginning farmer” has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 consecutive years. Farmers must be actively engaged in poultry production. Applicants must not have a composter that is within its NRCS contract lifespan. Potential applicants are encouraged to contact the office to ensure eligibility to participate in the program. The Kent Conservation District accepts applications year-round; however, the first application deadline is December 9, 2020. All applications will be batched monthly and will be expedited through the contract process in order to implement water quality BMPs in a timely manner.

The *Cost-Share Opportunities for Beginning Farmers* project in Kent County, Delaware is a Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) project led by the Kent Conservation District. Partners participating in the project include Farm Freezers LLC, Greener Solutions LLC, Delaware Department of Agriculture’s Nutrient Management Program, DNREC’s Division of Watershed Stewardship and Division of Watershed Management and Assessment, and the Delmarva Poultry Industry (DPI). The project will improve water quality, biosecurity, as well as help Delaware meet the Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL).

RCPP promotes coordination between the USDA NRCS and its partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and landowners. The Assisting Beginning Farmers with Mortality Management project is a 2017 RCPP project that brings additional resources to Kent County.

For more information, contact the Kent Conservation District at 302-608-5370 or visit <https://www.kentcd.org/index.htm> for more information.

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