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# Poultry Patter

Volume 8 Number 5 November, 1970

## POLLUTION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

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Pollution, waste disposal, and environmental quality have been receiving increased attention during the past couple of years. Part of this emphasis has been due to increased concentration of industry and agriculture, which has intensified problems that have previously gone unnoticed or unrecognized because of their limited scale and dispersion. Cultural changes in our population are resulting in a society that is more critical of its surroundings and more demanding in the requirements for the places to live, work, and play. They realize the future largely depends on the steps taken now to prevent contamination, reduce pollution, and preserve the more pleasant aspects of our environment.

Increased restrictions in the form of laws and regulations can be expected as programs are developed to protect environmental quality. A good example is the proposed feed lot regulations on which hearings were recently held. I hope you as a concerned producer of poultry and livestock took the opportunity to attend one of these hearings and express your viewpoints and raise questions concerning the proposals. Most of our producers are concerned about the quality of the environment and the effect of their production operations on its pollution. But they are also concerned about the effect of undue regulation and restriction on the economic and efficient production of high quality, wholesome food at reasonable prices. They should continue to make their voices heard as the opportunity arises.

Many agricultural practices are already subject to control under the authority of existing laws and regulations relating to water pollution, disposal of sewage, and other wastes. A quick review of a summary of air pollution control rules and regulations reveals that farm operations are included in types of activities that may be restricted.

Air quality standards and emission regulations, which apply to any source or emission of air contamination within the state, have been adopted by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. The standards establish desirable levels of air quality, which on the basis of present knowledge are not expected to produce health hazards or impairment, injury to agricultural crops or livestock, damage to or deterioration of property, and hazards to air or ground transportation. Ambient air quality standards are primarily concerned with sulfur-containing substances, dust and suspended particulate matter in the air.

Regulations also require that no person shall cause or permit the handling, use, transporting or storage of any material in a manner which may allow unavoidable amounts of particulate matter to become airborne. Provisions are made to restrict emission of particulate matter from incinerators to comply within a stated time. Most types of open burning are also prohibited subject to the establishment of public or commercial refuse collection services or exemption due to sparsity of population.

The release of objectionable odors in areas zoned residential, recreational, institutional, retail sales, hotel, or educational is prohibited. Somewhat less stringent specifications are placed on light industrial and other zoning classifications. An odor is considered objectionable when 30 percent or more of a sample of people exposed to it believe it to be objectionable in usual places of occupancy.

This brief review of the air pollution control regulations shows some areas that should be of concern to the poultry producer. I am sure we are going to see complaints against farmers brought under these regulations. We have already had an instance of a complaint due to the odors evolved from the use of a litter conditioning material. Although the odor problem is only present for a couple of days during the treatment, it still can be offensive to the surrounding area and be a subject of complaint from the affected parties.

Apart from laws and regulations involved in pollution control and environmental protection, we still have to contend with the law of nuisance, which is an essential part of common law. Anything that unreasonably interferes with the use and enjoyment of one's property may become a nuisance. The interference must be substantial and offensive to a normal person of average sensitivity. It is often difficult to determine whether things such as odors are nuisances because there are no really objective ways to measure them. As a result, measurements become matters of personal opinion, too frequently biased by emotions and other factors.

Spreading urbanization and high density housing of poultry and livestock have put considerable pressure on farmers in some areas and can be expected to involve others in the future. Increased concern about the environment and the stigma resulting from objectionable odors, flies, and similar conditions associated with poultry will add to the pressure. Poultrymen need to initiate positive action to ease the pressure and head off any complaints. Each producer faces a different situation and each operation should be examined in light of the problems it can contribute to its immediate environment — both physical and human.



We must recognize that our urban-rural structure has changed and that these changes are likely to continue. There are some things that can be done to avoid confrontation with neighbors who may be offended and agencies which are charged with enforcing the regulations adopted to protect our environment.

Prompt and proper disposal of dead birds is important-- both from the standpoint of disease prevention and aesthetics. Probably the greatest challenge lies in the area of waste handling and disposal. Watch developments in this area and make every attempt possible to curb obnoxious odors, particularly in areas where complaints from neighbors might be possible.

Regulations may be adopted that will affect any new construction or major changes to existing facilities. Be sure to check on restrictions before any expansion or new venture reaches the final planning stages. A study of residential and business trends in your area should be made before any building is done. Do not build new houses upwind from your neighbors or near an existing or anticipated residential or business area. Poor planning has been the source of many complaints in other areas of the country.

Keep the farm clean, neat, and orderly. Screening a poultry operation from your neighbors with shrubs or trees may also be helpful. These plantings may reduce the incidence of feather and dust complaints that are sometimes a troublesome start in unfriendly neighbor relations. A positive, cooperative approach may prevent a complaint from being lodged. If an awareness of your problem is known and a realization of your concern for minimizing unpleasant situations can be established, a less critical attitude may be expressed toward your operation.

I am sure we are not going to escape unscathed from the current concern over environmental quality. Waste disposal, pollution, and environmental quality will be subjects of educational programs and publications planned by your extension specialists and your associations. Please keep your extension specialists and your associations informed of any complaints you might receive in regard to your operation. Perhaps we may be of assistance and can make the nature of the problem known generally to others in the industry.

Issued in furtherance of cooperative extension work in agriculture and home economics, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Roland H. Abraham, Director of Agricultural Extension Service, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101.

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