



USDA-CSREES 2006 National Water Quality Conference

[Poultry Litter Use and Transport Survey in Maryland and West Virginia](#)

Litter transport is a commonly utilized strategy to address nutrient excesses. However, little hard information is currently available on the transport and fate of litter other than the tonnages involved in state subsidy programs. The focus of this poster will be: (1) to determine willingness-to-pay (WTP) for litter from non-users of litter; and (2) to document the movement of litter. This research relied on data collected from mail surveys were sent to 999 farmers in two counties in West Virginia (WV) and 1036 farmers in four counties in Maryland (MD), with response rates of 58% and 55% respectively. The Maryland sample contains two major poultry producing counties and two minor poultry producing counties.

The majority of non-poultry farmers in WV (66%), and the majority of non-poultry farms in Maryland's major poultry producing region (60%) have used litter recently. While non poultry growers in Maryland's minor poultry producing region are much less likely to use poultry litter (34%), these figures still suggest a robust market for poultry litter. Mean WTP for broiler litter among non-users ranged from \$6.7 to \$2.4 per ton. In one WV county (Pendleton), mean WTP was higher than current market prices for litter indicating a potential for market growth. Farmers who responded that they would pay nothing for poultry litter cited mainly environmental rather than financial concerns about litter use.

In WV, 63% of poultry growers reported transferring some or all their litter off-farm. In MD, 69% reported transferring at least some poultry litter off-farm, while 54% indicated that they transfer all of their poultry litter off farm. Not surprisingly, most litter (90% WV, 97% MD) stays within the county where it was generated. Insufficient agricultural land resources are one reason why many growers transfer litter. Among broiler chicken growers, over half of the respondents did not have a land base sufficient to land apply all their litter. A minority (15%) applied all their litter on-farm even though the farmer owned or rented insufficient acreage for litter application.

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