



2008 USDA-CSREES National Water Conference
Sparks, NV

Protecting Water Quality with Incentives for Litter Transfer in Georgia: Learning From Experience

Kristin Rowles, Mark Risse, Jeff Mullen, Sam Collier

Abstract Text:

The state of Georgia is the top poultry producing state in the nation. Along with chickens, the industry produces poultry litter in correspondingly significant quantities. In some areas where the industry is concentrated in the state, especially in North Georgia, nutrient over-enrichment threatens water quality and the use of water resources for drinking water, fishing, and recreation. Animal operations are estimated to be an important contributor of phosphorus loadings in this region.

This project was created to support and improve the implementation of litter transfer incentives in Georgia in order to facilitate the movement of animal waste nutrients out of nutrient-stressed watersheds in North Georgia to watersheds elsewhere in Georgia with nutrient-poor soils. The project is focused on nutrient transfer out of the Upper Chattahoochee River watershed.

The purpose of this project is to build a foundation to support a nutrient transfer program in Georgia. A primary focus of the project is the development of a partnership of stakeholders, government agencies, and nongovernmental organizations to support the program's development and implementation. The second major focus of the project is to provide the research and analysis needed to ensure effective program design. In 2005, the Natural Resources Conservation Service created a pilot nutrient transfer program in Georgia. This project is evaluating the results of the pilot program and conducting additional research as needed to support recommendations for improvement. The research component will focus on lessons learned from litter transfer incentives in Georgia and other states. Another important focus of this research will be potential linkages between nutrient trading and litter transfer. The third major focus of the project will be outreach to a broader audience – those who will participate in, be affected by, or have an interest in the nutrient transfer program.

The project began in July 2007 and will be complete in September 2008. It is being conducted with funding support from the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission, the NRCS Conservation Partnership Initiative, and the CSREES Southern Region Water Quality program. In this presentation, we will report on the project's accomplishments and findings to date. The presentation will focus on a compilation of lessons learned from litter transfer incentives in Georgia and other states.

Impact Statement:

Implementation of this project started in July 2007, and therefore, the impact of the project cannot be assessed at this time. However, the expected impact is to improve and build support for Georgia's litter transfer incentive program, and in doing so, to improve water quality and animal waste management practices.