NRCS Assistance for Avian Influenza

Talking Points
While NRCS has a number of practices and technical assistance that may be of assistance to poultry producers, these conservation practices are generally not designed to limit risks associated with animal disease transmission.

However, EQIP may be able to assist producers with some bio security measures, animal carcass disposal for relatively small-scale animal mortality situations, and for installing conservation systems that can improve the underlying economics of a poultry operation. This includes nutrient and litter management practices and energy conservation systems.

Producers should visit their local NRCS field office to discuss options and potential programs that may be available for their operation.

Background
Within USDA, APHIS is the lead agency tasked with assisting poultry producers with animal disease situations. As a result, EQIP has very limited utility for providing animal disease response assistance. However, EQIP may be able to assist producers in other ways.

The following are some of the conservation best management practices available for poultry operations to address resource concerns with assistance from NRCS. These conservation practices serve as building blocks, and are meant to work in combination with other practices as part of a total resource management system. NRCS technical assistance is available to help producers implement these practices. Financial assistance may also be available for eligible producers through our conservation programs. Not all practices are available in every state.

Conservation Activity Plans target the specific needs of individual growers and help them plan for implementation of the listed conservation practices. These plans cover areas such as nutrient management, feed management, and energy efficiency and are available with financial assistance for eligible producers. In the case of an energy efficiency plan, or energy audit, the plan will help growers decide on ways to help improve ventilation, insulation, and lighting systems, and provide a cost benefit analysis. The energy audit can be used as a basis for financial assistance from NRCS, Rural Development, or other state or utility programs.

Producers may access multiple USDA programs as long as the programs are not being used to provide financial assistance to the same practices or farm projects.

**Access Control (CPS472)**
The use of fence for temporary or permanent exclusion of animals, people, vehicles, and/or equipment from an area. This could facilitate better facility biosecurity control.

**Air Filtration and Scrubbing (CPS371)**
A device or system for reducing emissions of air contaminants from a structure via interception and/or collection.
Animal Mortality Facility (CPS316)
An on-farm facility for the treatment or disposal of livestock and poultry carcasses for routine mortality events.

Composting Facility (CPS317)
Decreases non-point source pollution, minimizes odor, and reduces the likelihood of diseases spreading with an environmentally sound method for disposing of normal mortality from poultry houses.

Conservation Cover (CPS327)
Protects soil and water resources by establishing a permanent vegetative cover.

Emergency Animal Mortality Management (CPS368)
Provides methods of disposal of animal carcasses caused by non-disease related mass mortality events. APHIS provides assistance for disease related events.

Farmstead Energy Improvement (CPS374)
Reduces energy use on farm by making improvements to energy users such as ventilation fans and heating equipment. Requires an energy audit.

Building Envelope Improvement (CPS672)
Reduces heating and cooling energy requirements by sealing air leaks and increasing the building insulation. Requires an energy audit.

Feed Management (CPS592)
Manipulating and controlling the quantity and quality of available nutrients, feedstuffs, or additives fed to livestock and poultry in order to reduce the amount of nutrients in manure/litter.

Filter Strip (CPS393)
Reduces contaminants and sediment in runoff with a strip or area of herbaceous vegetation.

Heavy Use Area Protection (CPS561)
Reduces erosion and protects surface and ground water from contamination by constructing concrete pads at the entrance to poultry houses and manure sheds.

Lighting System Improvement (CPS670)
Reduces lighting energy requirement by replacing or retrofitting existing lighting systems with more energy efficient systems. Requires an energy audit.

Manure/Litter Storage (CPS313)
Controls runoff to keep water clean by constructing a structure to temporarily store manure.

Nutrient Management (CPS590)
Managing the amount (rate), source, placement (method of application), and timing of plant nutrients and soil amendments to improve water quality.
Poultry Litter Amendment (CPS629)
Improves air quality by reducing ammonia emissions and reducing phosphorus availability in manure. This can reduce the ventilation and heating needed early in the growing cycle.

Windbreak (CPS380/650)
Reduces particles, ammonia, and other odors from tunnel fans, and creates visual screens by planting vegetative buffers around poultry houses.

Facility Closure (CPS360)
The decommissioning of poultry houses, and/or the rehabilitation of contaminated soil, in an environmentally safe manner.