



## Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

### Investing in Delaware - 2016

Created by the 2014 Farm Bill, the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is a partner-driven, locally-led approach to conservation. It offers new opportunities for USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to harness innovation, welcome new partners to the conservation mission, and demonstrate the value and efficacy of voluntary, private lands conservation.

In 2016, NRCS is investing up to \$220 million in 84 high-impact projects that impact every state in the nation, including two in Delaware. This investment, which builds on the \$370 million invested for 2014 and 2015, will help conservation partners and agricultural producers conserve natural resources, leading to cleaner and more abundant water, healthier soil, enhanced wildlife habitat and many other benefits.

### Assisting Beginning Farmers with Poultry HQ BMPs

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$1 million (State)

Lead Partner: Sussex Conservation District

Number of Partners: 8

Participating State(s): Delaware

There is a backlog of beginning farmers waiting for approval for composters or mortality freezers, poultry waste structures and heavy use area protections. Over the past two years, approximately 125 new poultry houses have been constructed in Sussex County with another 228 planned over the next two years. With the high concentration of poultry operations, comes the potential for high nitrogen and phosphorus levels in the soil, which may potentially leach into the groundwater and run off into surface water. This is exacerbated with the sandy soils, high water tables and 46 inches of average rainfall each year. These beginning farmers are also faced with increased startup costs with the new Delaware Stormwater Regulations. Construction costs have increased with the required engineering, permitting and the installation of mandatory BMPs to be in compliance with the Delaware regulations. This project will increase the opportunity for beginning farmers in Sussex County to receive funds for composters or freezers through an expedited process.

### DE & MD – Meeting WIP Goals in the Chesapeake Bay

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$4.5 million (CCA)

Lead Partner: Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts

Number of Partners: 15

Participating State(s): Delaware & Maryland (**lead state**)

Partners will come together in this project to accelerate the installation of best management practices to enable Maryland and Delaware farmers to meet the nutrient and sediment water quality goals set forth in the Chesapeake Bay TMDL. In Maryland, the focus will be on animal related BMPs, including animal waste storage, stream fencing, heavy use areas and barnyard runoff. To meet Maryland's new Phosphorus Management Tool requirements, conservation district staff will work with dairy farmers to install state-of-the-art liquid separation

technology to overcome the cost of moving the liquid portion of manure long distances to crop fields that require more phosphorus. In Delaware, emphasis will be on crop production and expanded use of cover crops. On the Delmarva Peninsula, crop farmers will be advised on the recent research finding on innovative variable rate nitrogen application



techniques (GreenSeeker) and be encouraged to sign up for advanced nutrient management practices. Conservation district staff will be trained on nitrogen removal woodchip bioreactors, which are showing up to 90% Nitrogen removal on trial sites.





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