

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Farm Service Agency  
Carolyn County FSA Office  
9194 Legion Road, Suite 2  
Denton MD 21629  
(410) 479-1202

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT  
FOR FARM LOAN PROGRAM PROJECT**

**Class II Assessment  
for Maryland based producer with operations in  
Wicomico, Maryland at  
Tax Map 52, Grid 8, Parcel 17**

**DRAFT COPY  
Notice of Availability**

**June 4, 2014**

**COVER SHEET**

**Proposed Action:** The Farm Service Agency of the United States Department of Agriculture proposes to issue a guaranteed loan to fund the construction of three poultry houses in Wicomico County, Maryland on a farm tract identified as Tax Map 0052, Grid 0008, Parcel 0017.

**Type of Statement:** This is a Class II site-specific Environmental Assessment performed in conformation with the scope and limitations of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA.)

**Lead Agency:** Farm Service Agency (FSA) United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

**Cooperating Agencies:** USDA, Farm Service Agency is tasked with completing the environmental analysis concerning this project. Input and assistance were provided by USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) who has worked with the applicant in regard to formulating an appropriate / nutrient waste management plan, as well as an appropriate conservation plan and related land clearing and wetland assessments as warranted.

The Maryland State Clearinghouse for Intergovernmental Assistance was consulted and input requested from their cooperating agencies including (but not limited to) the Maryland Historical Trust /State Historical Preservation Officer (SHPO,) State Departments of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environmental which also encompasses those charged with Coastal Zone Management (CZM.)

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was similarly consulted as was the Maryland Department of the Environment in regard to the requisite Notice of Intent (NOI) for the Maryland General Discharge Permit for Animal Feeding Operations, applicable to Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO's) and Maryland Animal Feed Operations (MAFO's) which became effective December 1, 2009.

This project entails the filing of a nontidal wetland, therefore the Maryland Department of Environment nontidal wetland division was contacted as well as the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers.

**Further Information:** Deanna Dunning, Farm Loan Officer  
Caroline County Farm Service Agency  
9194 Legion Road, Suite 2  
Denton, MD 21629  
Deanna.dunning@md.usda.gov  
(410) 479-1202 ext 107

**Abstract (Summary):** The purpose of the project is to produce integrated poultry in Wicomico County, Maryland. Construction of three (3) poultry houses, each being 66' x 562', is proposed at the site. The farm is currently cropland which has been enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program. Upon completion of the proposed construction, the farm is projected to have the capacity to house a maximum of 172,128 birds based on the industry standard density of 0.75 birds per square foot of interior space. The proposal also includes provisions for the construction of a structure to provide for the farm's manure storage capacity.

**Comments:** While not required, it is recommended that comments be put in writing. Comments from interested parties concerning the environmental impact of this proposal should be directed thru:

UDSA, Farm Service Agency  
Farm Loan Programs  
Attn: Deanna Dunning  
9194 Legion Road, Suite 2  
Denton MD 21629

The comment period will conclude fifteen (15) days from the final publication of the Notice of Availability (NOA) of the findings of this evaluation. No further action will be taken on this proposal until after the conclusion of the comment period. Said comments will be considered and incorporated into the final assessment.

## Table of Contents

	Page No.
1.0 Introduction	7
1.1 Background	7
1.2 Purpose and Need	7
1.3 Regulatory Compliance	7
1.4 Organization of EA	7
2.0 Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives	8
2.1 Proposed Action	8
2.2 Alternatives	8
2.2.1 No Action Alternative	9
2.2.2 Alternative A	9
2.2.3 Alternative B	9
2.2.4 Alternative C	9
2.2.5 Alternative D	9
2.3 Resources Eliminated from Analysis	9
3.0 Affected Environment	9
3.1 Biological Resources	9
3.1.1 Definition of Resource	
3.1.2 Affected Environment	
3.2 Water Resources	10
3.2.1 Definition of Resource	
3.2.2 Affected Environment	
3.3 Cultural Resources	10
3.3.1 Definition of Resource	
3.3.2 Affected Environment	
3.4 Soil Resources	11
3.4.1 Definition of Resource	
3.4.2 Affected Environment	
3.5 Air Quality	11
3.5.1 Definition of Resource	
3.5.2 Affected Environment	
3.6 Socioeconomics	12
3.6.1 Definition of Resource	
3.6.2 Affected Environment	
3.7 Environmental Justice	12
3.7.1 Definition of Resource	
3.7.2 Affected Environment	
3.8 Important Land Resource	12
3.8.1 Definition of Resource	
3.8.2 Affected Environment	
3.9 Wilderness Area	12
3.9.1 Definition of Resource	
3.9.2 Affected Environment	

3.10 Coastal Zone Management Area	13
3.10.1 Definition of Resource	
3.10.2 Affected Environment	
3.11 Coastal Barriers	13
3.11.1 Definition of Resource	
3.11.2 Affected Environment	
4.0 Environmental Consequences	
4.1 Biological Resources	13
4.1.1 No Action Alternative	
4.1.2 Alternative A	
4.2 Water Resources	14
4.2.1 No Action Alternative	
4.2.2 Alternative A	
4.3 Cultural Resources	15
4.3.1 No Action Alternative	
4.3.2 Alternative A	
4.4 Soil Resources	15
4.4.1 No Action Alternative	
4.4.2 Alternative A	
4.5 Air Quality	15
4.5.1 No Action Alternative	
4.5 .2 Alternative A	
4.6 Socioeconomics	17
4.6.1 No Action Alternative	
4.6.2 Alternative A	
4.7 Environmental Justice	17
4.7.1 No Action Alternative	
4.7.2 Alternative A	
4.8 Important Land Resources	17
4.8.1 No Action Alternative	
4.8.2 Alternative A	
4.9 Wilderness Area	17
4.9.1 No Action Alternative	
4.9.2 Alternative A	
4.10 Coastal Zone Management Area	17
4.10.1 No Action Alternative	
4.10.2 Alternative A	
4.11 Coastal Barriers	18
4.11.1 No Action Alternative	
4.11.2 Alternative A	
5.0 Cumulative Impacts	
5.1 Introduction	18
5.2 Past, Present & Reasonably Foreseeable Actions	18
5.3 Cumulative Analysis	18
6.0 Mitigation Measures	18
7.0 List of Preparers	19

8.0 List of Person and Agencies Contacted	19
9.0 References	19
10.0 List of Attachments	19
11.0 Consistency with FSA Environmental Policies	20
12.0 Environmental Determinations	20

## **1.0 Introduction**

The applicant will be a new integrated poultry producer with the operation located at 5327 Archie Jones Road, Wicomico County, Maryland where the applicant resides. The applicant will produce poultry per a contractual agreement with Mountaire Farms.

### **1.1 Background**

The project is designed to construct three (3) broiler houses on a 15.94 acre tract that he is purchasing from a family member near Willards, Maryland. The site will have a capacity of 172,128 birds. The proposal is to build three (3) poultry houses, each being 66' x 562', with all houses on the property running east to west, stacked north to south. The houses will be built to industry standards and be compliant with all county and state building laws. A stormwater management plan must be approved by Wicomico County prior to any funds being disbursed.

### **1.2 Purpose and Need**

The applicant will be the primary beneficiary of the project. The facilities, upon completion, will allow the applicant to produce integrated poultry in a Mountaire Farms compliant facility in Wicomico County, Maryland. The applicant will be providing an agriculture service that is in great demand and this enterprise will allow the producer to generate adequate income from the farming operation to retire debt and provide a standard of living acceptable to the area. This facility will allow the applicant to produce integrated poultry for Mountaire Farms efficiently and in up to date structures. The integrator, will in turn, provide additional employment for local people in jobs such as field representatives, feed mill operators, processing plant workers, truck drivers, and construction workers. In addition, the increased volume of poultry production will help contribute toward providing a readily available low cost food supply for the American public.

### **1.3 Regulatory Compliance**

Based on a review of the material provided and FSA Handbook 1 EQ, 2 EQ, and FMHA 1940-G this proposal is in compliance with NEPA, CEQ, Potential Relevant Environmental Laws, and Executive Orders.

### **1.4 Organization of EA**

The Environmental Assessment (EA) is organized in format established in FSA Handbook 1 EQ Exhibit 21 and is addressed in the Contents Section of this document.

## 2. **Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives**

Alternative designs and alternative projects were considered and here are our findings in regards to this proposal: Alternative designs are not feasible in that every integrator has a specific set of plans and specs that producers must use to ensure placement of birds. Alternative projects were considered but are not feasible for the applicant because this proposal is located in close proximity to Mountaire Farms hatcheries, feed mills, and processing facilities and is in an area occupied by numerous other Mountaire Farms producers. This makes it economically feasible for Mountaire Farms to provide birds, and more likely that the applicant will retain his contract with Mountaire Farms. In analyzing the proposal “No Action” was considered but not a selected option. Based on the environmental review, it was determined that the impact of the proposal did not justify selection of the “No Action”.

### 2.1 Proposed Action

The project is designed to construct three additional poultry houses compliant with Mountaire Farms standards on a 15.94 acre tract near Willards, Maryland. The site will have a total capacity of 172,128 birds. The site work will be completed and the houses built by local reputable contractors in accordance with plans and specs required by Mountaire Farms and the Wicomico County Planning and Zoning office. The farm currently will have a manure storage structure built to provide adequate storage for litter generated on farm. A stormwater management pond will be installed on the property as well as swails located between the poultry houses to control runoff.

### 2.2 Alternatives

Alternative designs and alternative projects were considered and here are our findings in regards to this proposal:

There were five alternatives considered for this project. These alternatives were developed after careful consideration of the proposed project and determining the best possible location for the proposed project that would produce the least possible environmental impact and minimize impact on the operation itself. These alternatives represent a range of alternatives, with three alternatives being eliminated from further analysis.

2.2.1 No Action Alternative. The no action alternative would consist of FSA not approving the loan and thus, not allowing the construction of the proposed project. This alternative would not allow the applicant to generate the additional farm income required to support his family and debt service.

2.2.2 Alternative A is a proposed action alternative. Under the proposed action alternative, FSA would approve the loan as proposed, allowing the proposed construction to provide related farm income for the applicant



2.2.3 Alternative B is to relocate on current property: This alternative is not applicable as the farm tract to be purchased is currently bare cropland and the area being purchased is only of the size large enough to accommodate the proposed project. The area that has been selected for the proposal is currently an open area that will not require any tree or stump removal.

2.2.4 Alternative C is to relocate on a different property. The applicant is purchasing this property from a family member who is selling the property to him for a cost per acre that is significantly below current market value. It would be a financial burden for him to purchase another parcel, thus affecting his ability to repay the debt. In addition without having another set property to evaluate we are unable to determine if there is less of environmental impact on a different property.

2.2.5 Alternative D is to engage in a different form of agricultural production: The applicant could consider utilization of the site for crop or other livestock production as an alternative means of generating annual farm income. However, the rate of return the applicant would receive from another form of livestock production or crop production would be nominal and would not justify the related costs and chattel acquisition expenditures: therefore it would not achieve the intended purpose of the project

### 2.3 Resources Eliminated from Analysis

None of the following resources are located in the area of the proposed project and are therefore eliminated from the analysis: Important Land Resources, Sole Source Aquifers, Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Natural Landmarks, and Wilderness Areas.

## **3. Affected Environment**

### **3.1 Biological Resources**

#### 3.1.1 Definition of Resource

Vegetation, wildlife, and protected species including threatened and endangered species and their designated critical habitat. Endangered species known to occur in Wicomico County: none

#### 3.1.2 Affected Environment

Based on a letter dated April 11, 2014 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Chesapeake Bay Field Office, except for the occasional transient individuals, no federally proposed or listed endangered or threatened species are known to exist or will be affected by the proposal.

A site visit was made by FSA personnel to the proposed construction site area on April 15, 2014 and no listed threatened or endangered species were identified as present at that time, nor were any nesting Bald Eagles found. Except for occasional transient wildlife, no proposed or federally listed endangered or threatened species are believed to exist within the project impact area.

### 3.2 Water Resources

#### 3.2.1 Definition of Resource

Floodplains, wetlands, surface water quality, sole source aquifers, and wild and scenic rivers.

#### 3.2.2 Affected Environment

Surface waters as defined by EPA, are United States waters; primarily lakes, rivers estuaries, coastal waters and wetlands. The Clean Water Act is the principal law governing pollution of the nation's surface water resources. Based on a determination made by NRCS on May 11, 1988 there are hydric soils located on this tract.

Also according to FEMA Form 81-93 "Standard Flood Hazard Determination" there are no floodplains on this tract.

The potential impact to water quality exist due to construction activities and when complete, waste management. During construction, surface runoff will be controlled in accordance with the NPDES Storm Water Permit. Upon completion, water quality will be protected by producer's adherence to the Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) for application of litter. The applications will also have filed a Notice of Intent with the Maryland Department of Environment. Water for the completed project will be supplied by a well located on the farm.

This project is not located with a Sole Source Aquifer Recharge Area, nor are there any Wild and Scenic Rivers located in the State of Maryland per reviewing the following website (<http://www.nps.gov/rivers/>).

### 3.3 Cultural Resources

#### 3.3.1 Definition of Resource

Properties created by man and generally more than 50 years of age.

#### 3.3.2 Affected Environment

In accordance with Section 106 of National Historic Preservation Act, the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) was contacted to comply with cultural resource requirements. FSA received documentation dated March 12, 2014 that indicated there are not historic properties in the area of potential affect.

### 3.4 Soil Resources

#### 3.4.1 Definition of Resource

Highly Erodible Soils present within the area of impact.

#### 3.4.2 Affected Environment

According to NRCS-CPA-026E, Highly Erodible Lane (HEL) units do not exist on the 30.61 acre tract and therefore will not have effect on this resource.

### 3.5 Air Quality

#### 3.5.1 Definition of Resource

Sources of air pollution which include stationary, mobile and agricultural resources.

#### 3.5.2 Affected Environment

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) monitors and regulates air quality in the State per the mandates of the Federal Clean Air Act, the Maryland Healthy Air Act and the Code of Maryland Regulations for Air and Radiation (COMAR.) The project as proposed will fully comply.

The majority of emissions as a result of this project will be produced from application of poultry litter. The 200 KW emergency generator does not require a permit, but will meet applicable EPA emissions standards and will use only low sulfur fuel. Compliance with the CNMP requires that producer keep emission to a minimum. Motor vehicle traffic will increase slightly during the construction phase, however, this will only be for a short time. Upon completion of the project, traffic will slightly increase due to the one to three times per week delivery of feed and the occasional movement of flocks. Appropriate driveways will be put in place using best management practices to allow for delivery trucks and for others to enter and exit the farm as needed while minimizing dust impacts.

The farm is located in a Non Attainment area as can be verified by review of the following website

<http://www.epa.gov/oar/oaqups/greenblk/hncs.html>)

Open burning is strictly regulated by the state and accordingly the waste and refuse generated on site from construction, or ongoing operations, will be removed and not burned. If burning is conducted it will be with an approved burning permit from the Maryland Department of Natural Resource Forest Service. Bird mortality will not be incinerated but disposed of via the more environmentally favorable method of composting. The existing vegetation and woodland surrounding the construction site will be preserved intact to the maximum extent possible to provide a vegetative buffer.

### 3.6 Socioeconomics

#### 3.6.1 Definition of Resource

Population, housing, income and employment activity area.

#### 3.6.2 Affected Environment

This proposal, during construction and at completion, will not adversely impact nearby residents. The site is in rural Wicomico County and located approximately 4.2 miles from the Town of Willards. The owner currently resides on the property that is adjacent to the tract to be purchased and will continue to do so after the loan is made. The proposal will not change the population in the area; therefore it will not have any impact on the public, community schools, hospitals, social services, etc. Basic land use will not change. It is not expected that any significant long-term adverse impact will exist because of this project. There will be no adverse affect on the minority population of the community or of the residence who are low income. No social or economic impacts are expected to result from the individual farm participation in an FSA programs.

### 3.7 Environmental Justice

#### 3.7.1 Definition of Resource

Impact to minority and low income populations.

#### 3.7.2. Affected Environment

Based on the results of the most recent U.S. Census Survey 16.2% of the population in the county lives below poverty level and a minority population of about 34.3% exists. These figures were based on the review of the Census Bureau website <http://quickfacts.census.gov>. There will be no adverse impact to either of these groups from this project. Based on FSA Handbook 1 EQ Par 58C since the area affected by the proposed activity does not have a minority population of 50% and above, or a population of 20% or more living below poverty level, there are not Environmental Justice Concerns.

### 3.8 Important Land Resources

#### 3.8.1 Definition of Resource

Prime farmland, unique farmland, prime forestland, and prime rangeland

#### 3.8.2 Affected Environment

This proposed project will not convert any important farmland to a nonagricultural use and is therefore exempt from the provisions of this act.

### 3.9 Wilderness Area

#### 3.9.1 Definition of Resource

Areas determined to be “wilderness” as defined by The Wilderness Act.

#### 3.9.2 Affected Environment

This project is not located within or near a Wilderness Area per review of [www.wilderness.net](http://www.wilderness.net) website.

### 3.10 Coastal Zone Management Areas

#### 3.10.1 Definition of Resources

Lands, waters, or natural resources located in the coastal zone.

#### 3.10.2 Affected Environment

FSA will not participate in any action that does not preserve and protect the nation's coastal resources. Policy is to conform with the goals and objectives of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) and the Executive Orders of the State of Maryland. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Maryland Coastal Program, Watershed Services, Tawes State Office Building, E-2, 580 Taylor Avenue, Annapolis, Md, 21401 and (410-260-8732) administers this program and maintains area boundary maps. This project is located within the Coastal Zone Management area.

The project has been reviewed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and Maryland Department of Environment as per documents contained in Appendix D. This project, per Project Number MD20140129-0050, was found to be consistent with the Maryland Coastal Zone Management Program as long as the applicant registers for the General Discharge Permit for Animal Feeding Operations. A CAFO permit will be required as part of loan approval as well as a CNMP will be required for the project. There will be neither adverse impacts on estuaries nor roadside or public ditches, and there is not any known State rare or endangered species found on the project site and forest fragmentation will be limited.

### 3.11 Coastal Barriers

#### 3.11.1 Definition of Resources

Unique landforms that provide protection for diverse aquatic habitats and serve as the mainland's first line of defense against the impacts of coastal storms and erosion.

#### 3.11.2 Affected Environment

CBRA was amended by the Coastal Barrier Improvement Act of 1990 and restricts Federal expenditures and financial assistance that may encourage development of coastal barriers. This project is not located in the Coastal Barrier Resource Zone or Other Protected area and therefore will not have an adverse effect on this resource.

## **4.0 Environmental Consequences**

### 4.1 Biological Resources

4.1.1 No Action Alternative was considered but not selected as proposal will not adversely impact the environment

4.1.2 Alternative A: The USFWS was formally consulted for their concurrence. A copy of their response dated April 11, 2014, is found in Appendix D affirming no further consultation or Biological Assessment is required. Based on these findings, FSA has determined, in coordination with the USFWS, that this project will not affect a listed endangered or threatened species; it will not adversely affect proposed critical habitat for an endangered or threatened species; and the project will not jeopardize the continued existence of a proposed, endangered, or threatened species.

## 4.2 Water Resources

4.2.1 No Action Alternative was considered but not selected as proposal will not have an adverse environmental impact.

4.2.2 Alternative A: The project was reviewed to determine migratory pathways for surface and ground water and potential impacts on both surface water and groundwater. The two major nutrients of concern are phosphorus and nitrogen which are water soluble. The subject property is located within the Upper Pocomoke River Watershed which is part of the larger Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The subject site is not situated within the 100 year flood plan.

The proposed activity will include the disturbance of an area less than 5,000 square feet of a nontidal wetland that has no “significant plant or wildlife value”. Consultation was made with the Maryland Department of Environment Wetlands and Waterways Division and the Wicomico County Soil Conservation District that determined the area to be disturbed that is considered a nontidal wetland is not located in a Critical Area and no mitigation is required. Consultation is being made with the Army Corp of Engineers and a response is anticipated from the agency.

The major concern with a concentrated animal feeding operation (CAFO) is the contamination of surface and groundwater by animal waste. Accordingly, the project’s operators will be required to follow the approved, site specific, CNMP which addresses animal waste management. It will be developed by NRCS for the operation, and reviewed and approved by both NRCS and the Wicomico County Soil Conservation District. The document will be on file with the Maryland Department of Agriculture. It is also part of the requirements of the Maryland Department of the Environment for their Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) permit. The practices outlined in this approved plan will allow the

operators to sufficiently control any runoff from the operation so that water quality will not be adversely impacted.

This farm will be operated under the specifications of an approved CNMP. This is a dry litter operation and not a wet litter operation. Litter will be removed from the farm and the requisite records kept for inspection and monitoring. Any litter stored will be done so in accordance with the NRCS and MDE approved CNMP plan in a fashion that prevents the litter from being leached until it can be properly disposed of.

There are no roadside ditches bordering the property. There are private ditches on and bordering the project site. The site specific measures outlined in the approved CNMP will ensure that surface water is not significantly adversely impacted by the proposed poultry operation in that it is required to meet specific technical standards designed to minimize the transport of nitrogen and phosphorus to surface water. In addition, a Water Pollution Prevention Plan, along with a Stormwater Management Plan approved by Wicomico County must be followed

There are no sole source aquifers or wild and scenic rivers located on or adjacent to this property.

#### 4.3 Cultural Resources

4.3.1 No Action Alternative was considered but not selected as proposal will not have an adverse environmental impact.

4.3.2 Alternative A: According to SHPO letter dated March 12, 2014 the proposed project site does not contain any historical properties; therefore there will be no adverse effect as a result of this project.

#### 4.4 Soil Resources

4.4.1 No action alternative was considered but not selected as proposal will not have an adverse environmental impact.

4.4.2 Alternative A: According to NRCSA-CPA-026E, HEL units do not exist on the 15.94 acre tract.

#### 4.5 Air Quality

4.5.1 No action alternative was considered but not selected as proposal will not adversely impact the environment.

4.5.2 Alternative A: The farm is located in a rural area and odor from the poultry facility is not measurable or regulated in the County. Dilution of odors is caused through the mixing of odors with ambient air. This dilution of odorous air is a function of distance, topography, and meteorological conditions. Odors and particulate drift are unlikely to be significant and

also the existing tree buffer along the property line will act as a filter for dust and odorous compounds. By maximizing the distance between potential odor sources and the public, the potential for odor complaints will be minimal.

The use of the management practices specified in the approved CNMP will also serve to reduce objectionable odors. The poultry houses will be cleaned out per integrator specifications and top crusted between flocks on an as-needed basis. Poultry waste / litter will be removed from the site, and will only be stored on the property in a temporary or emergency situation. The plan provides for the construction of adequate litter / manure storage capacity and addresses the proper handling of this stored material.

Dust generated while the poultry facility is in operation will occur mostly during feeding, with the dust being controlled by a mist system in the houses and interior fans. Good management of the ventilation system within the poultry houses will aid in the reduction of humidity, which is a cause of objectionable odors.

Topographical features can either enhance dilution or reduce dilution of odors depending on the particular features. Wind breaks, vegetative buffers or tree lines like those found on the farm tract will enhance CO<sub>2</sub> / O<sub>2</sub> exchange and thus encourage mixing of the odorous air with clean air, and when coupled with the distance of the poultry houses from the public, shall result in intermittent local minimal odor impacts. Based on the climate of the eastern seaboard of the United States, there will be a few days in the year where weather conditions can cause odor to hang in the area, however, this will be a short term non-significant impact.

Construction activities will generate minor localized dust problems that will be temporary in nature with no significant long-term impact on air quality after completion of the construction phase. If conditions become too dusty during construction, soil may be wet down to control fugitive dust. Short term localized temporary air pollution will occur from the potential heavy machinery associated with constructing pads for the poultry houses; however, these emissions will not have a significant or even long-term adverse impact on the local community or surrounding environment. Appropriate driveways are in place and will be upgraded, along with new driveways being installed, using best management practices to allow for delivery trucks one to three times per week and for others to enter and exit the farm as needed while minimizing dust impacts.

Existing air quality in the area is considered good and will remain so after the proposed poultry operation is up and running.



#### 4.6 Socioeconomics

4.6.1 No Action Alternative was considered but not selected as proposal will not adversely impact the environment.

4.6.2 Alternative A: The social and economic impacts of FSA actions will be evaluated on the programmatic level by the National Office. No impacts are expected to result from the individual farm participation.

#### 4.7 Environmental Justice

4.7.1 No Action Alternative was considered but not selected as proposal will not adversely impact the environment.

4.7.2 Alternative A: Based on 1 EQ Handbook par 58C, since the area affected by the proposed activity does not have a minority population in excess of 50% or a low income population of more than 20% living below poverty level there are no environmental justice concerns.

#### 4.8 Important Land Resources

4.8.1 No action alternative was considered but not selected as proposal will not adversely impact the environment.

4.8.2 Alternative A: This project does not directly or indirectly convert any important land resources. Production of integrated poultry is considered an agriculture enterprise.

#### 4.9 Wilderness Area

4.9.1 No action alternative was considered but not selected as proposal will not adversely impact the environment.

4.9.2 Alternative A: Project is not located within or near a Wilderness Area per review of the wilderness.net website.

#### 4.10 Coastal Zone Management Areas

4.10.1 No action alternative was considered but not selected as proposal will not adversely impact the environment.

4.10.2 Alternative A: The project is located in a Coastal Zone Management Area and therefore the Maryland Department of Environment and Natural Resources was consulted. Per the comments received, the applicant must use best management practices outlined in the CNMP to be approved by the local NRCS office. There will be neither adverse impacts on estuaries nor roadside or public ditches. A storm water management plan must be approved by the Wicomico County Planning & Zoning Department.

#### 4.11 Coastal Barriers

4.11.1 No Action Alternative was considered but not selected as proposal will not adversely impact the environment.

4.11.2 Alternative A: The project is not located in a Coastal Barrier Resource Area nor a Other Protected Area as can be evident by the flood map.

### **5.0 Cumulative Impacts**

#### 5.1 Introduction

This section of the assessment is dedicated to the review of the possible cumulative impacts the applicant's proposed activity may present in the Wicomico County area. Based on the review of information provided by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, SHPO, MDE, MDNR, NRCS and various websites, it does not appear that this project will have an adverse impact on the Wicomico County environment provided producer follows the Best Management Practices (BMP's) outlined by participating agencies.

#### 5.2 Past, Present and Reasonably Foreseeable Actions

To the knowledge of the preparer, there has not been any past activity associated with the subject property that would have had a negative effect on impacted resources. The proposed is a localized project of limited scope; therefore the environmental factors will be minimal and further mitigated by the conformance with the provisions of a site specific and approved comprehensive nutrient management plan (CNMP) designed to address the animal waste generated by confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs).

#### 5.3 Cumulative Analysis

Any minor localized negative impacts the creation of this poultry operation may have on the human environment will be minimized by the proper implementation and adherence with the provisions of the approved CNMP devised for the CAFO operation and on file with the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) and Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), as well as compliance with applicable State and County permitting processes and setback requirements.

### **6.0 Mitigation Measures**

Mitigation measures have been identified throughout this assessment in the various areas of impact. These measures have been agreed to by the operator and appropriate State and Federal Agencies and will be part of the FSA's conditions for loan approval. The implementation of the approved comprehensive nutrient management plan will be used to control potential problems that have been identified throughout this assessment; this along with the implementation of industry best management construction practices are appropriate mitigation measures for agricultural construction projects similar in nature to the proposed project.

## 7.0 List of Preparers

This assessment was prepared by Deanna Dunning, in consultation with Joseph Scott, Maryland State Environmental Coordinator, who have worked closely with FSA's sister agency, NRCS, the Maryland State Clearinghouse for Intergovernmental Assistance and the Maryland Department of the Environment in gathering information for evaluation as guided by FSA Handbook 1 EQ.

## 8.0 List of Persons and Agencies Contacted

Maryland Department of Planning – Maryland Department of Agriculture, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Maryland Department of the Environment, Wicomico County, Maryland Historical Trust, Maryland Department of Environment Nontidal Wetland Division

U.S. Army Corp of Engineers

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Chesapeake Bay Field Office

## 9.0 References

Websites:

[www.wilderness.net](http://www.wilderness.net)

[www.rivers.gov/maryland.php](http://www.rivers.gov/maryland.php)

<http://quickfacts.census.gov/gfd/states/24/24045.html>

<http://www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program/coastal-barrier-resources-system>

[www.epa.gov/oar/oaqps/greenbk/hnccs.html](http://www.epa.gov/oar/oaqps/greenbk/hnccs.html)

[www.epa.gov/reg3wapd/presentations/ssa/index/htm](http://www.epa.gov/reg3wapd/presentations/ssa/index/htm)

<http://www.mde.maryland.gov/programs/Land/RecyclingandOperationsprogram/AFO/Pages/CAFO.aspx>

[http://ecos.fws.gov/tess\\_public/countySearch!speciesByCountyReport.action?fips=24045](http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/countySearch!speciesByCountyReport.action?fips=24045)

[www.nature.nps.gov/nnl/state.cfm?state=MD](http://www.nature.nps.gov/nnl/state.cfm?state=MD)

FSA Handbook 1 EQ – Environmental Quality Programs for State and County Offices, published and maintained by United States Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency, Washington D. C. 20250

Farmer's Home Administration (FmHA) Instruction 1940-G, Environmental Program, published and maintained by United States Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency, Washington, D. C. 20205.

## 10.0 Attachments

Appendix A – Acronyms & Abbreviations

Appendix B – Definitions

Appendix C – Relevant Laws & Regulations

Appendix D – Agencies & Individuals Contacted  
Appendix E – Supporting Documentation

### 11.0 Consistency with FSA Environmental Policies

There is nothing to indicate the proposed project would not be in keeping with the environmental policies of 1-EQ.

### 12.0 Environmental Determinations

The following recommendations shall be completed:

(a) Based on an examination and review of the foregoing information and such supplemental information attached hereto, I recommend that the approving official determine that this project will have () a significant effect on the quality of the human environment and an Environmental Impact Statement must be prepared. This project will not have () a significant effect on the quality of the human environment.

(b) I recommend that the approving official make the following compliance determinations for the below-listed environmental requirements.

Not in Compliance	In Compliance	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Clean Air Act
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Federal Water Pollution Control Act
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Safe Drinking Water Act - Section 1424 (e)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Endangered Species Act
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Coastal Barrier Resources Act
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Coastal Zone Management Act - Section 307(c) (1) and (2)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Wild and Scenic Rivers Act
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	National Historic Preservation Act
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Archaeological and Historical Preservation Act
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Subtitle B, Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Subtitle C, Wetland Conservation of the Food Security Act
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farmlands Protection Policy Act
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Departmental Regulation 9500-3, Land Use Policy
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	E.O. 12898, Environmental Justice

State environmental laws

(c) I have reviewed and considered the types and degrees of adverse environmental impacts identified by this assessment. I have also analyzed the proposal for its consistency with FSA environmental policies, particularly those related to important farmland protection, and have considered the potential benefits of the proposal.

Based upon a consideration and a balancing of these factors, I recommend from an environmental standpoint that the project:

Be approved

Not be approved because of the reasons outlined in Appendix E.

Signature of Preparer	Date
Deanna Dunning	
Name of Preparer	
Farm Loan Officer	
Title of Preparer	

***\*See Part 1 of this handbook for listing of officials responsible for preparing assessment.***

Signature of Concurring Official	Date
Name of Concurring Official	
Title of Concurring Official	

**State Environmental Coordinator's Review**

---

I have reviewed this environmental assessment and supporting documentation. Following are my positions regarding its adequacy and the recommendations reached by the preparer. For any matter in which I do not concur, my reasons are attached in Appendix E.

Do Not Concur      Concur

DRAFT

- |                          |                          |                                    |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Adequate Assessment                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Environmental Impact Determination |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Compliance Determinations          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Project Recommendation             |

---

Signature of SEC

---

Date

---

Joseph Scott

Name of SEC