



UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND

EXTENSION

Solutions in your community

Update on Current Poultry Extension & Research Programs

By

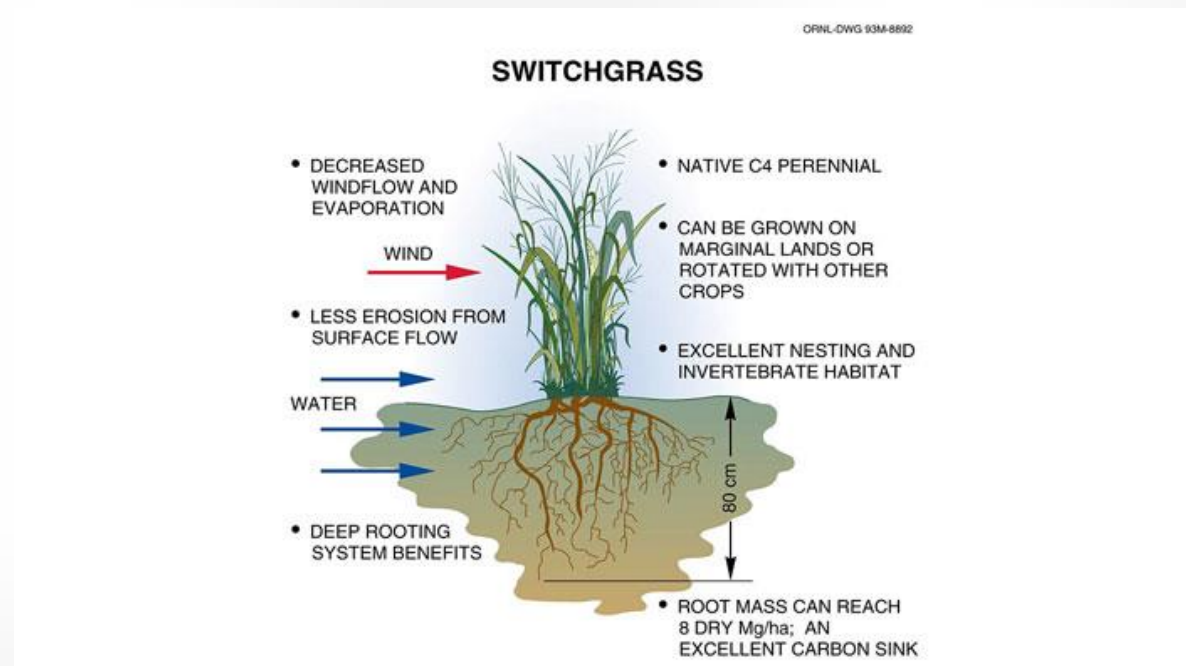
Jon Moyle & Jenny Rhodes

Switchgrass



Switchgrass as Bedding

- Grasses, including native switchgrass (SG), can produce large amounts of biomass and can be grown on marginal land



Switchgrass as Bedding

- The first problem is particle size



Switchgrass as Bedding



Switchgrass as Bedding



Conclusions (from the first year)

- No effect on;
 - Mortality
 - Weight
 - Feed conversion
- Paw quality, not sure
 - Company wide feed problem resulted in poor quality for all flocks
 - Only have good results for 1 flock
 - (18% vs. 19% condemnns)

Buzzards

(Turkey and Black Headed
Vultures)



Buzzards (Turkey and Black Headed Vultures)

- Some farms are experiencing problems with vultures
 - They are digging in the composters and scattering debris around farms
 - Visiting multiple farms?
 - Biosecurity?



Measuring Buzzard Numbers

- DPI conducted a survey of commercial poultry growers to determine extent of the problem
- Placed game cameras on farms and counted the number of vultures that visited the compost area



What We Have Learned

- Activity is greatest in the morning
- Black Headed Vultures seem to be more aggressive than Turkey Vultures
- Other raptors also visit composters
 - Hawks
 - Bald Eagles
- Poor composting is not always associated with vulture activity



What We Need to Learn

- Do they carry pathogens from farm to farm?
 - Internal
 - External / mechanical
- How many farms do they visit?
- Ways to deter them from visiting farms



Covers for Composters



High Use Pads (HUPs)



HUPs

- Concert pads at the ends of Chicken houses (or in front of composters and litter storage sheds or other high use area)
- Makes cleaning up after bird removal and/or litter management more efficient
- Not given credit for preventing nutrients from entering the bay

HUPs



HUPs



HUPs

Early Results (per event)

lbs/HUP	lbs/ft ²	lbs/acre
109	0.07	1,635

HUPs

- There are 4,620 chicken houses on Delmarva
- Each averaging ~5.5 flocks per year
- They are preventing approximately **2,769,690** lbs of litter/nutrients from entering the local water way and the bay each year

(109 x 4,620 x 5.5)

HUPs

- Factors that effect the amount on nutrients recovered
 1. Weather (wet weather results in more nutrients being carried out of the houses, high winds can blow nutrients away from the HUPs)
 2. Load-out crew
 3. Method of cleaning HUPs

Lastly

- We need a state data base for rules regarding rearing poultry
- We need educators to find the rules for their county and municipality's and pass that information on to me so we can put it on the small flock web site

Thank You



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