



Concerning Victorian EPA proposal to classify poultry litter as industrial waste



For many Australian chicken growers, spent litter is a valuable fertiliser in high demand from cereal croppers and composters supplying processed product to the horticulture and viticulture sectors. These uses may soon become difficult in Victoria, where the state Environment Protection Authority has proposed that from 1st July this year, animal manures will be regarded as industrial waste under the state's Environmental Protection Act, along with such materials as soil contaminated with asbestos or arsenic, used oil filters and oils, and large plastic or metal containers.

If this regulatory change goes ahead, at best Victorian chicken growers will be dealing with more 'green tape', in the form of extra paperwork for every load of spent litter destined for use as fertiliser or soil ameliorant. At worst, growers that make small or inadvertent transgressions such as paperwork errors may be subject to severe penalties designed for use in much more serious situations.

ACGC Chair Allan Bullen is a VFF EPA Reference Group member and he has outlined his disappointment with the EPA's decision in print and radio interviews, saying that there would be considerable implications to farm management.

Although previous advice to the EPA appears to have been discounted, the VFF will continue to oppose the EPA's proposal, and the EPA has indicated a preparedness to consult further on the matter.

ACGC is not aware that any other state EPAs are considering such a reclassification of animal manures as industrial waste, but will be writing to each state to recommend that this not take place.

For further reading, an article published last week at Farm Online can be found [here](#).

A selection of recent articles of interest, as supplied by Agrifutures Chicken Meat Programme

Investigation of Campylobacter colonization in three Australian commercial free-range broiler farms

Free range growers may be interested in this study, which is the first to demonstrate that horizontal transmission of Campylobacter (from the environment to birds) plays an essential role in the colonisation of free-range broiler farms in Australia. This points to carryover infections between batches, which could be addressed by improved hygiene and biosecurity practices. Click [here](#) for more.

Environmental sustainability assessment of poultry productions through life cycle approaches: A critical review

Life Cycle Assessments (LCAs) are taking place in many industries that need to accurately assess their environmental impact, with respect to elements such as water use, greenhouse gas production, energy consumption and carbon sequestration. This Italian study is a good start for those curious about what is involved, what has been done and what still needs to happen. Click [here](#) for more

In pursuit of a better broiler: growth, efficiency, and mortality of 16 strains of broiler chickens

Over a 2-year period, this Canadian study looked at 7,528 broilers from 16 different genetic strains, comparing conventional commercial broilers to slower growing birds. The authors compared the growth, efficiency, and mortality of the birds to one of two target weights: 2.1 kg and 3.2 kg. Unsurprisingly, the conventional birds were faster and more efficient converters, but interestingly their mortality rates were not different to the slower birds. Click [here](#) for more.