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Nuisance Myths and Poultry Farming B 1299

Summary

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Nuisance Myths and Poultry FarmingDan L. Cunningham¹

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Introduction

Poultry production is the number one agricultural enterprise in Georgia, accounting for approximately 50 percent of the value of farm products produced. Modern poultry farming originated in north Georgia in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and has continued to grow and expand as consumer demand for poultry products has increased. To meet the demands for more poultry products, producers and poultry companies across Georgia have expanded their operations by building more production and processing facilities. At the same time, the state has experienced increased urbanization and loss of agricultural lands in many of its rural counties. As cities have become more crowded and expensive to live in, many people have moved to the country to satisfy their desire for a more serene lifestyle of "country living."

Unfortunately, many of these individuals understand very little about commercial farming practices. They often tend to be intolerant of typical farming practices that occasionally produce dust, odors and insect pests as part of a normal farming enterprise. This unfortunate set of circumstances is leading to increased conflict between farmers and citizens who have had little prior exposure to agricultural operations. In some cases, poultry farmers are finding it difficult to operate or expand their operations with new production facilities.

As poultry farming has increased in Georgia, there has been a trend toward developing zoning regulations in many counties to manage these issues and provide a viable working environment and pleasant atmosphere for everyone. A prudent, fact-based zoning ordinance benefits all citizens. A carefully planned and devised zoning ordinance means continued success of the family-owned farm, which provides a stable, consistent tax base for the community, while simultaneously providing protection for all the citizens. Those responsible for implementing zoning regulations want to be certain that their actions are supported by facts. Conversely, a poorly designed zoning ordinance can result in unfair treatment of some members of the community and can negatively impact the economy of that community. Zoning ordinances not based on facts may lead to unnecessary community conflict and litigation.