



# Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board

## *Poultry Water Quality Management Plan Program*

### **Our Mission**

Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) develops and certifies Water Quality Management Plans (WQMP) for all persons who own or operate poultry facilities (Texas Water Code, Sec. 26.302). A water quality management plan (WQMP) is a site-specific conservation plan indicating when, where, and how to implement conservation practices following standards in the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Field Office Technical Guide. Each WQMP is tailored to each landowner's conservation needs and management goals while ensuring adherence to state water quality law.

### **Who needs a plan?**

Any person who owns or operates a poultry facility for commercial purposes is required to obtain a WQMP that includes adequate means to handle and dispose of poultry carcasses, poultry litter, and other poultry waste regardless of whether the person owns the poultry. Those that use a liquid waste handling system may be required to obtain a permit or other authorization from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).

### **Common Conservation Practices**

Conservation practices included in WQMPs ensure the wise use and conservation of Texas' natural resources. Examples of essential conservation practices often found in Poultry WQMPs include prescribed grazing, nutrient management, pest management, animal waste management, and erosion control measures. These practices provide valuable benefits such as improving or maintaining surface and groundwater quality by minimizing agricultural nonpoint source pollution, reducing soil erosion, improving soil health, as well as protecting air quality.

### **Odor Control**

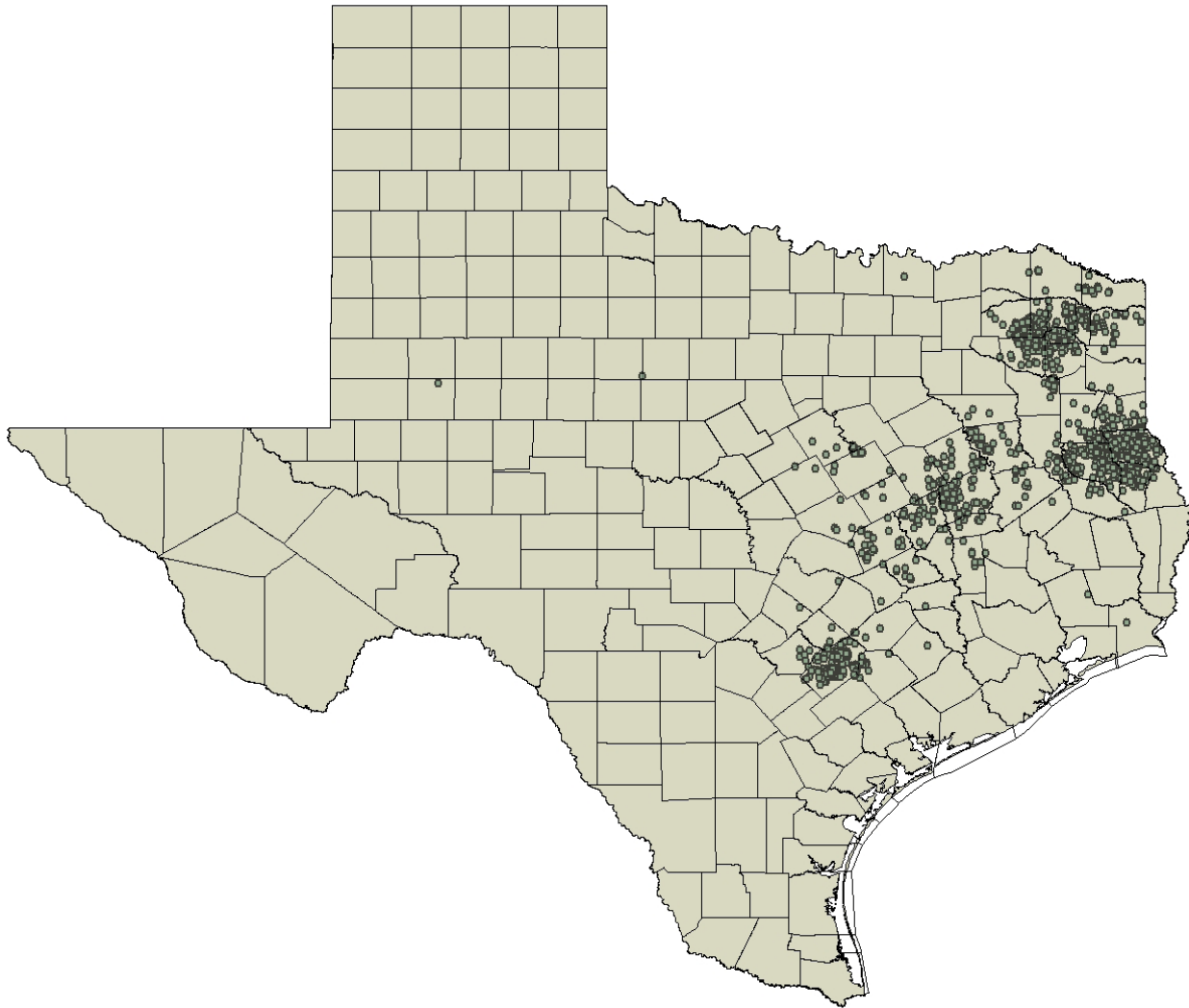
If a poultry facility is located less than one-half of a mile from a business, off-site permanently inhabited residence, or place of worship, and if the presence of the facility is likely to create an odor nuisance for neighbors, the TSSWCB may not certify a WQMP unless the poultry facility provides an odor control plan that the TCEQ determines is sufficient to control odors. Failure to obtain a WQMP certified by the TSSWCB, or failure to comply with the WQMP, results in referral of the facility to the TCEQ for potential enforcement that may include penalties and/or the requirement to obtain permit coverage.

### **Status Reviews/Compliance**

The TSSWCB routinely conducts status reviews of certified Poultry WQMPs to determine if the plans are being followed, or if a revision is necessary due to expansion or other reasons. Incidents of non-compliance may be reported to the TCEQ for potential enforcement regardless of corrective action being taken.



# Distribution of Poultry WQMPs in Texas



## Mortality Management

Acceptable methods for handling and disposing of poultry mortality include placement in a landfill permitted by the TCEQ to receive municipal solid waste, composting, cremation or incineration, extrusion, on-farm freezing, rendering, or any other method the TCEQ determines to be appropriate. Poultry carcasses may not be disposed of by burial on-site except in the event of a major die-off that exceeds the capacity of a poultry facility to store and process poultry carcasses by the normal means used by the facility. A mortality rate of 0.3% or more per day of the facility's total poultry inventory is considered a major die-off.

## Poultry Related Resources

TSSWCB maintains a number of administrative and technical resources pertaining to all applicable laws and rules, mortality composting, catastrophic burial requirements, example WQMPs and Odor Control Plans, and litter storage requirements. All of these resources can be accessed via:  
<https://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/programs/water-quality-management-plan/poultry-water-quality-management-program>

## For More Information Contact:

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