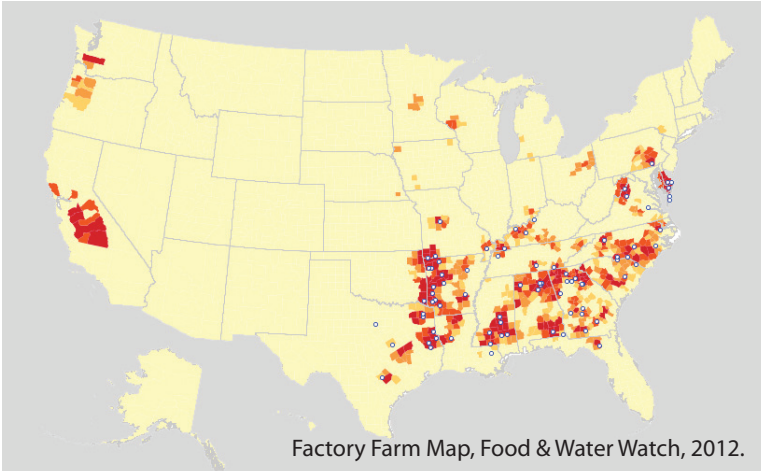


Fowl Matters

A Guide to Health, Environmental Justice and Civic Action around Broiler Chicken

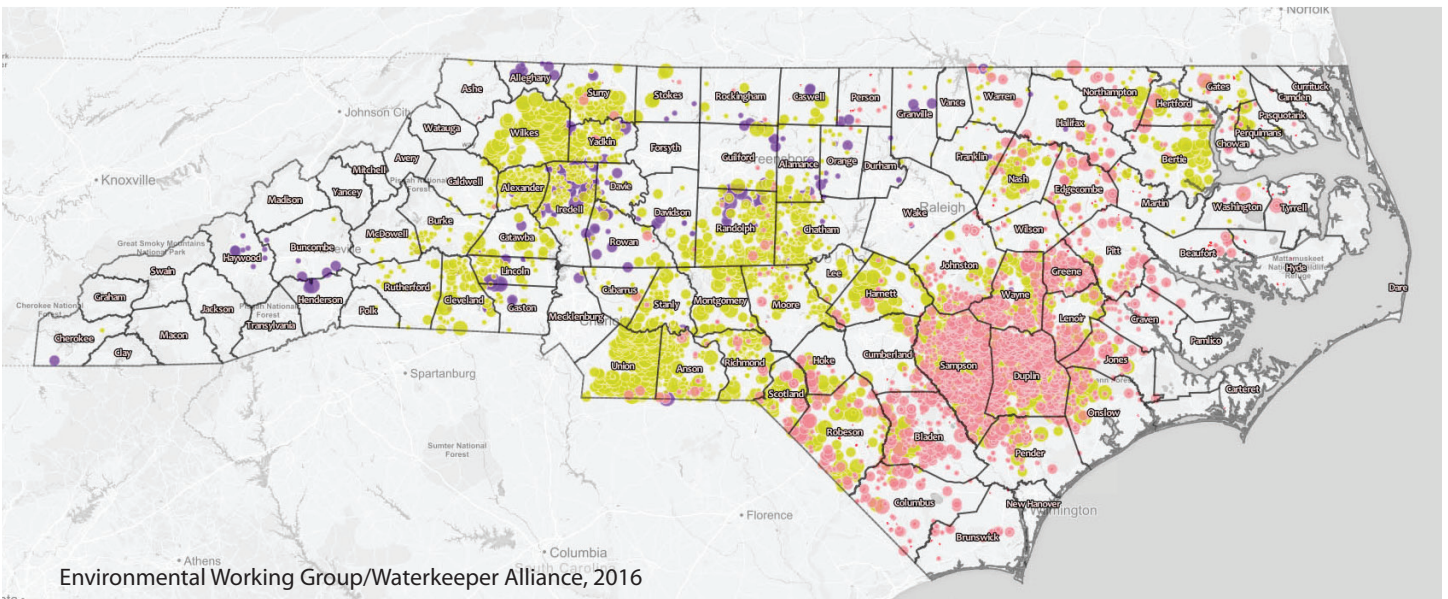
Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) raise and feed a range of animals in confined situations. Cows, hogs, chickens, turkey and other animals do not graze on pastures. Their manure is heavily concentrated in lagoons or sprayed on crop fields. The USDA defines broiler CAFOs as annually raising and slaughtering 500,000 or more chickens for meat consumption.



How did Big Ag come about?

Modern-day Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations were created through a system of **subsidies, deregulation, and vertical integration**. In 2015, the U.S. produced 9 billion broilers. Today, 97 percent of the chicken we eat is produced by 30,000 farmers under contract with Tyson, Pilgrim's Pride, Perdue and Sanderson Farms.

Broiler CAFOs are concentrated in what is known as the southeast poultry corridor. Poultry farming is now the number one agricultural operation in North Carolina and in 2014 had an economic impact of \$12.8 billion. The green dots below show the spatial distribution of poultry operations in NC.



Impacts of Broiler CAFOs & Ongoing Actions

Water



Waste and fertilizer runoff from poultry operations enter rivers, lakes, and streams. **Nitrogen** and phosphorus pollution causes algal blooms, kills fish, and pollutes drinking water. Consuming this water can cause birth defects, bladder diseases, and thyroid problems.

Support the **North Carolina Environmental Justice Network** and **Waterkeeper Alliance's** campaigns to clean up poultry operations.

Animal Justice



Throughout their short lives, the vast majority of conventionally raised broiler chickens have **no access to the outdoors and less than one square foot to move around**. They are engineered to grow so quickly that their bodies cannot support their weight.

Sign up for the **ASPCA's Shop With Your Heart** initiative which encourages consumers to buy animal-welfare certified products.

Air



Communities living near broiler CAFOs are exposed to **ammonia, particulate matter, and heavy metals** when large fans aerate confined waste. Breathing in polluted air can cause respiratory diseases, asthma, and lung cancer.

Learn about the **Community Engagement, Environmental Health and Justice** Laboratory at the University of Maryland-College Park. Support the **Assateague Coastal Trust**, **Salisbury NAACP**, and other members of a coalition on the lower Eastern Shore of Maryland.

Defend Academic Integrity



To successfully bring about social, environmental, economic, and political change, it is essential to equip coalitions in higher education with research and **advocacy skills**, and for them to act **without fear of repercussions**.

Labor



Contract growers sign unfair contracts and spend vast sums to convert their farms into factories. They often become saddled with debt. **Workers** suffer from extreme heat, job insecurity, and exposure to other occupational hazards.

Support efforts by the **Rural Advancement Foundation International** and **Western North Carolina Workers' Center**.

End Ag Gag



Ag Gag laws silence insider revelations, including conditions inside CAFOs, environmental harms, food safety breaches, and labor violations. They evolved from **Right-to-Farm Amendments** and criminalize free speech.

Support the **Food Integrity Campaign's** efforts to protect whistleblowers and advance free speech.

Climate Justice



Poultry litter incinerators release more **carbon monoxide, particulate matter, nitrogen oxide, and carbon dioxide than new coal plants**. Poultry production and incineration facilities are often disproportionately sited in low-income areas and/or in communities of color.

Support research and action conducted by **Food & Water Watch**.

Save Antibiotics



Poultry CAFOs are breeding grounds for **antibiotic resistance**, which develops when drugs are used for non-therapeutic purposes. When consumers buy contaminated food at grocery stores, pathways of exposure multiply and can decrease the drugs' effectiveness for all human patients.

Join the Save Antibiotics Campaign through **Food & Water Watch**. Support research by **Rural Empowerment Association for Community Help**.



Want to learn more about the economic and political injustices surrounding CAFOs? Find the full report at <https://rachelcarsoncouncil.org/fowl-matters/>
Any questions or comments? Email us at office@rachelcarsoncouncil.org
Connect with us on Facebook @RachelCarsonCouncil and Twitter @RachelCarsonDC.