

Poultry waste a source of fuel

By Glenn Rolfe, The Leader & State Register

SEAFORD - A collaborative environmental engineering project that will transform chicken litter into a renewable steam-based energy source is expected to be online on the Eastern Shore by next September.

Allen's Hatchery, Inc., and JCR Enterprises of Seaford last week announced the signing of a definitive agreement with Georgia-based rem Engineering to construct a steam generation facility that will use poultry litter as its primary source of fuel.

The project will be constructed at Allen's Linkwood, Md., facility known as JCR Enterprises. It is expected to utilize more than 12,000 tons of poultry litter per year, producing approximately 15 percent of JCR's base steam demand, said Mike Pilcher, vice president of operations for Allen's.

Construction is scheduled to begin this fall with an expected completion date of September 2006.

"Our company has constantly been evaluating projects that will use poultry litter as a source of fuel," said Mr. Pilcher. "With the help of rem Engineering, we believe we've found one that will work."

Litter from an estimated 25 to 30 poultry farms in Delaware and Maryland will be used to generate steam to power JCR's 300 horsepower boiler, Mr. Pilcher.

"When we get it working, there are a lot of chances for building more. This is a renewable source of energy for the country," Mr. Pilcher said.

"We continue to endorse the doctrine that we, as an industry, must continually find ways to support our farmers and help maintain their economic viability," said Charles C. "Chick" Allen III, president and CEO of Allen's. "We look forward to bringing this important project online."

Presently, the bulk of poultry litter is returned to the land under nutrient management plans as a source of nitrogen and phosphorous for crops, Mr. Pilcher said.

"What we want to do is have an alternative source for farming, so we can take it (litter) somewhere rather than just the land. As you well know, we are getting less and less land here," said Mr. Pilcher.

"We are excited to be working side-by-side with Allen's to bring our waste-to-energy technology to the poultry industry," said David E. Mooney, vice president of rem Engineering, an engineering firm specializing in environmentally friendly power production based in Roswell, Ga.

"As our country faces significant shortages in energy resources, we are thrilled to introduce our

patented technology that utilizes agricultural waste, a renewable resource, to produce reliable, low-cost energy.

"Through their investment in this technology, Allen's continues to be an industry leader in environmental stewardship," Mr. Mooney said.

According to Mr. Pilcher, the project has the endorsement of the Maryland Department of the Environment, and the Maryland Secretary of Agriculture Lewis Riley.

"We are pleased with Allen Family Foods' announcement to develop a new alternative use for poultry litter in Maryland," Mr. Riley said.

"Finding suitable uses for poultry litter is one of the goals of the Memorandum of Agreement signed this summer by Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich Jr., the Maryland departments of Agriculture and Environment and the four major poultry companies operating on the Delmarva Peninsula. It is just one example of the strong working relations we have with the poultry industry for the benefit of both the economy and (Chesapeake) Bay restoration efforts."

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News Editor Glenn Rolfe can be reached at 629-5505 or grolfe@newszap.com.