

Media Advisory
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AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER HELMICK APPLAUDS POULTRY CASE COURT RULING

West Virginia Agriculture Commissioner Walt Helmick issued the following statement concerning Wednesday's federal court decision that said the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency cannot force poultry farmers to obtain permits for stormwater runoff from their farms:

"Poultry farming accounts for more than half of the agriculture revenue generated in West Virginia so this ruling obviously has a significant impact for our poultry producers and our economy. We believe that our poultry farmers are committed to doing things the right way with a genuine concern for the environment and this decision certainly backs up that thinking. Now West Virginia poultry farmers can get on with operating their businesses to serve the strong demand for their products."

The EPA had filed a case against Lois Alt's Eight is Enough Farm in Hardy County to compel her to apply for a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit under the Clean Water Act, but later reversed its order and threats of daily fines.

Alt feared that EPA could reinstate its order at any time. With the backing of both the West Virginia Farm Bureau and the American Farm Bureau Federation, she opted to keep the case alive, seeking a ruling that would clarify EPA's authority in future cases.