

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SaveFarmFamilies.org Launched to Raise Funds for Maryland Family Under Attack by Waterkeepers Alliance

Wicomico County Young Farmers, Maryland Farm Bureau, and Perdue Highlight Reckless Litigation by Extremists

Willards, MD (September 15, 2011) – The Wicomico County Young Farmers and Ranchers, the Maryland Farm Bureau, and Perdue today announced the launch of *SaveFarmFamilies.org*, a group of agriculture interests who have come together to raise much-needed funds for the legal defense of a Berlin, Maryland farm family involved in a protracted and crippling lawsuit with the New York-based Waterkeeper Alliance since March 2010.

The Waterkeeper Alliance filed a federal lawsuit against Alan and Kristin Hudson accusing them of violating the Maryland Clean Water Act. At the heart of this suit is a pile of fertilizer, believed by the Waterkeepers to be poultry litter, which the activists identified from a small plane they flew over the Hudson's property. Since the suit was filed, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) confirmed the pile was actually biosolids, which the Hudsons obtained from nearby Ocean City, as part of a successful environmental program to recycle municipal waste for agricultural purposes. MDE determined that no action was required other than to spread the biosolids on the farm's crops.

However, the Waterkeepers – as part of their campaign to end contemporary animal agriculture – have persisted with the suit, which has put a massive financial strain on the Hudson family and could force a settlement or bankruptcy while they wait to make their arguments in court sometime in 2012. In their suit, the Waterkeeper Alliance contends the Hudsons are a “factory farm,” despite the fact that they have only two chicken houses and has been farmed by members of the Hudson family for four generations.

SaveFarmFamilies.org is concerned because, if successful, the Waterkeepers' bankruptcy-by-litigation tactic could be a damaging precedent for America's family farmers, who could be dragged into court just for following every-day farming practices.

“The Waterkeepers litigation is a job killer for Maryland,” said Lee Richardson, a member of the Wicomico County Young Farmers and Ranchers and SaveFarmFamilies.org. “If this extremist group succeeds in forcing the Hudson family to settle or declare bankruptcy before arguments are even heard in court, they'll do it to other family farmers here and across the country, just because we don't conform to the Waterkeeper image of how animals should be raised.”

The lawsuit marks a watershed moment for the agriculture community, particularly in Maryland, where the farming industry plays a large role in the state's economy and is responsible for 14 percent of its workforce, the largest percentage of any sector in the state. Many local farmers believe that if this lawsuit proceeds it would open up the flood gate for more frivolous litigation.

“By pursuing this malicious lawsuit, this extremist group is sending a message to American farmers: if you raise chickens, hogs or cattle – and don’t do it their way – then the Waterkeeper Alliance is willing to use the courts to force you out of business,” said Val Connelly, with the Maryland Farm Bureau and SaveFarmFamilies.org.

SaveFarmFamilies.org encourages members of the agriculture community and those who care about sustaining family farming to visit www.savefarmfamilies.org, to learn about the threats and consequences of misguided environmental litigation and to make a donation to the Hudsons’ legal defense fund.

“The Hudsons can’t do it alone, they need help,” said Richardson. “This lawsuit is just the start and we need to send a loud and clear signal to these radical groups, otherwise there will dire consequences for family farms across the state of Maryland and around the country. We need to act now, or we could lose a great American asset – our farming community.”

For more information visit: www.savefarmfamilies.org

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About The Wicomico Young Farmers

The Wicomico Young Farmers is a non-profit organization comprised of Wicomico residents interested in production, business and many other aspects of agriculture. As a sub-committee of Wicomico Farm Bureau, Young Farmers serves as a stepping stone for younger members to learn about agriculture, develop leadership skills, and provide service to the community.

About The Maryland Farm Bureau

Maryland Farm Bureau is a private, non-profit membership organization. It is completely controlled by its members through the democratic process and is financed by voluntary membership dues. Its strength comes from the active participation of over 37,000 member families that belong to the state’s 23 county Farm Bureaus. Farm Bureau’s purpose is to increase net farm income and improve the quality of life by providing a legislative voice, increasing public understanding and promoting member involvement.

About Perdue

The Perdue Family of Companies includes Perdue Foods and Perdue AgriBusiness, family-owned companies dedicated to becoming the most-trusted names in food and agricultural products. The PERDUE® brand is the number-one brand of fresh chicken in the eastern United

States, and Perdue Farms offers a growing roster of quality food products for consumers and foodservice. Perdue AgriBusiness ranks among the top US grain companies and is a leading processor, merchandiser and exporter of agricultural commodities. Privately held and family-run for three generations, the two companies employ more than 21,000 associates dedicated to enhancing the quality of life through innovative food and agricultural products. For more information, visit www.perdue.com®.