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New Group Forms to Shift Poultry in Georgia From Factories to Farms

Georgians for Pastured Poultry (GPP), a new advocacy group, is releasing a white paper showing the damage chicken factories are having on the state, and promotes a humane and sustainable alternative: pasture raised chicken.

GPP is made up of Georgia-based farmers, chefs, animal welfare advocates, environmentalists, and health professionals, and stresses pasture-raised chicken as an alternative to the harmful chicken factories that dominate the state's geographical and political landscape.

The impact of these factories is detailed in a report that will be released on Thursday, February 9, at the Luckie Food Lounge in Atlanta. The event will also serve as the launch of Georgians for Pastured Poultry. A short investigative film supporting the report, produced by one of the founding members, [Compassion in World Farming](#), will debut at the launch.

“For the first time, we know the price Georgia is paying to be the largest producer of chicken meat in the country,” said Leah Garcés, USA Director of Compassion in World Farming, the lead founding member of GPP. “The cost to people, to our environment and to the welfare of chickens is simply too great. We want a future for Georgia that is better than the future that chicken factory farming has to offer. To that end, we have formed Georgians for Pastured Poultry (GPP).”

Colleen Kiernan, Georgia Chapter Director of [Sierra Club](#), also a founding member of GPP said, “We plan to work with food citizens, farmers and businesses alike to shift the market toward pasture raised chicken.”

The report reveals Georgia's industrial poultry operations produce enormous volumes of excrement, which washes into waterways. Collectively, they generate approximately 2 million tons of poultry litter annually, about 20% of the US total. The factory farming of chicken is having a negative impact on human health in the form of foodborne illnesses and antibiotic resistance. Food illnesses related to poultry consumption cost the United States over \$2.4 billion annually, more than any other food.

In addition, the modern broiler chicken is unnaturally large and has been bred to grow at an unnaturally fast rate, resulting in devastating leg disorders and heart and lung problems, the report states.

Attendees at the launch event are expected to include food retailers, food writers, chefs, legislators and media. This launch comes just weeks after the International Poultry Expo was held in Atlanta, where 25,000 poultry professionals gathered to discuss the industry's future.

Will Harris, owner of [White Oak Pastures](#) and a GPP founding member says: "Chickens were born to scratch and peck. These are natural instinctive animal behaviors. Unfortunately, industrial commodity livestock production removes costs from meat production systems by raising animals in mono-cultural confinement systems that do not allow these instinctive behaviors."

The launch of Georgians for Pastured Poultry and the release of this report comes at a time when fair, humane and sustainable food choices are on the rise in Georgia.

Since 2005, Georgia has seen a 600% increase in farmers markets.

"This trend shows that people are increasingly interested in where their food comes from and how it is produced," says Jennifer Owens, Director of Advocacy for Georgia Organics, also a founding member of GFPP. "It's all about choice in the market, and more and more people are choosing the fair, humane and sustainable option."

GPP's vision is for Georgia to become the leading state in the production and consumption of pasture raised poultry, where animal welfare, human and environmental health, and farmer and worker well being are equal to economics in the farming of chickens.

When: Thursday, Feb. 9, 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Where: Luckie Food Lounge (375 Luckie Street Northwest Atlanta, GA 30313).

Please note: A light lunch including pasture-raised chicken will be served.
Please **RSVP for the event** @ RSVP@ciwf.org

Georgians for Pastured Poultry consists of:

- Compassion in World Farming
- Darby Farms
- Fellowship of Southern Farmers, Artisans & Chefs
- Georgia Organics
- GreenLaw
- Sierra Club
- White Oak Pastures

GPP would like to thank Whole Foods Market® South Region for its contributions as a Special Advisor.