



Delmarva's Chicken Industry: *75 Years of Progress*

by
William H. Williams

In 1923, in Ocean View, Delaware, a housewife discovered that there was a strong consumer market for tender young chickens. Subsequently, a highly specialized broiler industry — broilers are chickens raised solely for meat — developed on the Delmarva Peninsula that provided American consumers with a nutritious white meat at a reasonable price.

During its seventy-five years of existence, the broiler industry significantly changed the nature of agriculture and clearly improved the economic prospects of rural people on the Delmarva Peninsula and, subsequently, in other regions of America. Moreover, the broiler industry's success revolutionized American eating habits by making chicken rather than beef or pork the nation's favorite meat.

Delmarva's Chicken Industry: 75 Years of Progress explains how and why the Peninsula became the pioneer in the production of meat-type chickens and why it continues to be a world leader in the production of broilers today. Above all, it is the story of men and women innovatively interacting with each other and with their physical environment as they bring modern science and technology, and old fashioned common sense and hard work to bear on the task of growing, processing, and marketing the highest quality chickens at the lowest possible cost.



William H. Williams is southern coordinator of the University of Delaware's Master of Arts in Liberal Studies Program and professor of history in the Delaware Tech/University of Delaware Parallel Program in Georgetown, Delaware. His other publications include *Anglo-America's First Hospital: The Pennsylvania Hospital, 1751-1840* (1976); *The Garden of American Methodism: The Delmarva Peninsula, 1769-1820* (1984); *The First State: An Illustrated History of Delaware* (1985); and *Slavery and Freedom in Delaware, 1639-1865* (1996).

