



Last duck farm seeks \$250,000 in aid from Suffolk County

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The Crescent Duck Farm is located at 10 Edgar Ave in Aquebogue, NY, June 25, 2015. Photo Credit: Doug Kuntz

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Long Island's last remaining duck farm has asked the county for \$250,000 for a building to keep its waste from fouling waterways.

A Suffolk Legislative committee advanced the grant request yesterday as part of an effort to fight nitrogen pollution.

The 142-acre Crescent Duck Farm in Aquebogue hatches and raises a million ducks a year, fourth-generation farmer Douglas Corwin told lawmakers. The farm ships ducks for “most of the better restaurants” in the Northeast and elsewhere and produced four containers of feathers shipped to China last year, he said.

Besides meat and feathers, the birds also produce 21,900 pounds of solid waste a year, according to the Suffolk Soil and Water Conservation District. That waste is currently stored in the open until it can be trucked away.

The grant would help the farm “build a fully concreted and covered” 65-foot-by-400-foot building to store the duck feces, which would be composted and given or sold to farms and nurseries, Corwin said.

“I doubt without some help we could build this storage,” he told the Environment, Planning and Agriculture Committee in Riverhead yesterday. “I would ask for consideration to help in preserving the Long Island duck industry.”

The building’s total cost would be \$600,000 to \$700,000. The county’s quarter of a million contribution would be paid for from a quarter cent sales tax earmarked for water quality projects.

The money would be given by the county to the Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District, which would help the farm with the project. The county cannot give money directly to help a private business, county

officials said. Legis. Al Krupski (D-Cutchogue) said “it supports the integrity of the environment and an important industry.”

Crescent Duck Farms has received assistance from the state of New York in the past. In July 2015, the state announced \$250,000 for a duck hatchery and in 2012, the state announced lower electric bills for the farm in exchange for creating jobs.

Corwin said the farm employs 82 people.

Long Island was once famed for its Pekin duck. By the 1940s, there were 90 duck farms in Brookhaven, Southampton and Riverhead. Peak production came in 1959, when Suffolk farms produced 8 million ducks, according to a 2009 Suffolk County report.

Many of the farms went out of business as environmental regulations became more stringent, Corwin said.