

THE CHICKEN SHIT IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

✘ Like Mark Bittman, I have rather obsessively been playing with this interactive map, showing where all the factory farms are in this country, broken out by county. In my case, the interest is personal. I moved from the hippie-Ag area around Ann Arbor, MI, to west MI, where much of the bigger Ag is located (the biggest skyscraper in the area is a soy processing plant). I've driven a lot in the backroads around here and seen lots of blueberry plantations, some diverse crop farms, and the long sheds housing some kind of unhappy industrially raised animals. This map provides a census of those unhappy animals.

I learned, for example, that there are 2.6 million egg-laying hens in the county, second only in the state to Allegan County, just south of here, which has 3.6 million layers.

It's overcast today. Which means when I walked the dog in the beautiful snowy day, the smell of chickenshit (from the farms some distance to the east) hung in the air. It's the first I noticed it so close to town, though there's one gorgeous park where the adjoining chickenshit farm (which is upriver of town) makes the park pretty unusable.

Anyway, have "fun" with the map (and related factoids). Let us know in comments what kind of shit farm you're living downriver from!