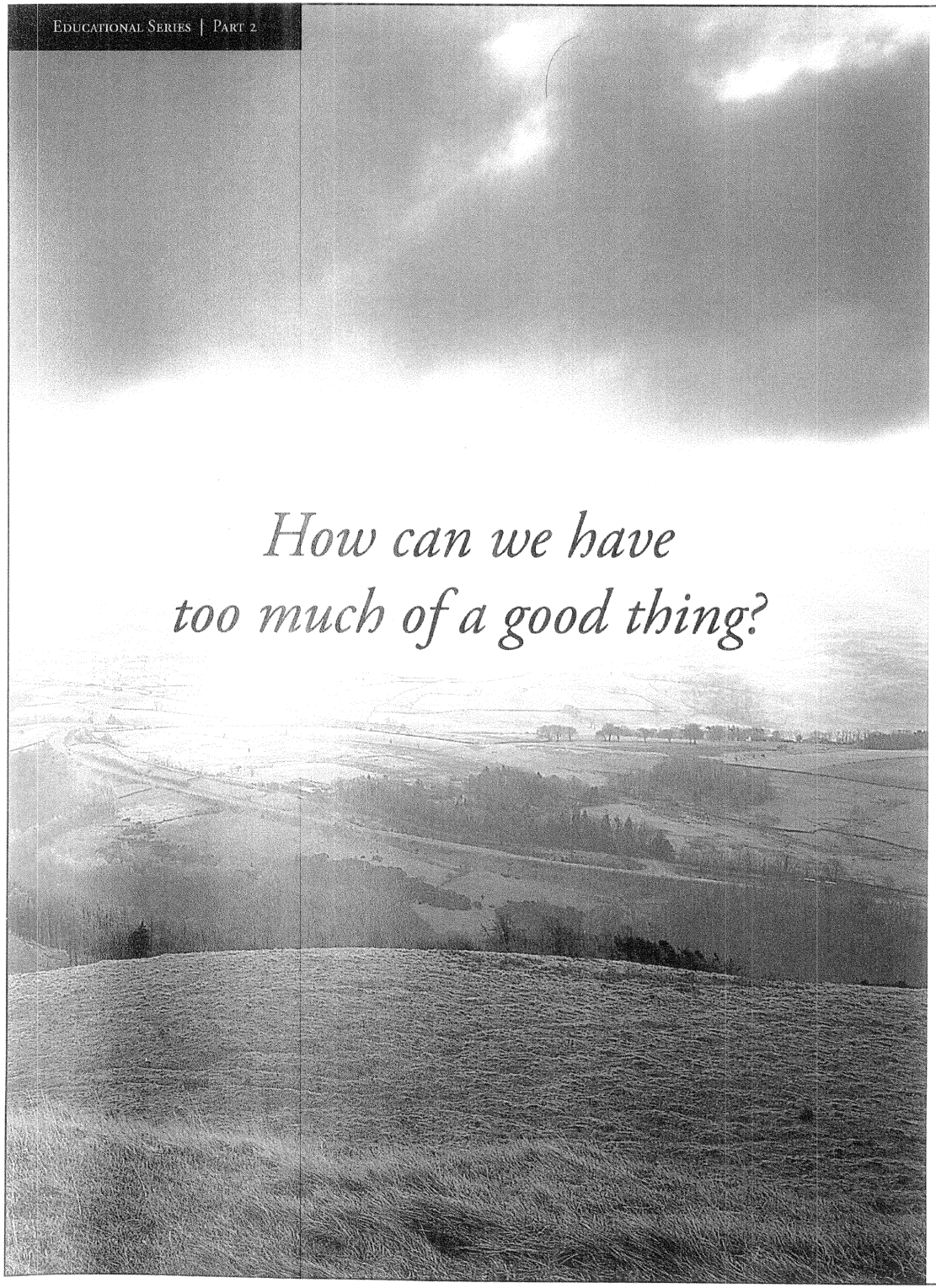

How can we have too much of a good thing?

Lately, a good deal of concern has been raised about the effect of excess nutrients on the land and waters of Eastern Oklahoma.

So where do these nutrients come from?

Nutrients can come from many sources, one of which is the use of poultry litter as an organic fertilizer. However, many other man-made and natural sources contribute nutrients to our watersheds.

The 1.2 million cattle that graze in Eastern Oklahoma deposit a considerable amount of nutrients on the land and in our streams in the form of manure. (By comparison, a broiler chicken produces less than three ounces of manure a day; a grazing cow produces 60 pounds per day and there are no application guidelines for cattle farmers.)

Other sources of nutrients include commercial chemical fertilizers used for agriculture and lawns, plant nurseries, rural septic tanks and municipal waste treatment facilities. Even golf courses, if not run properly, contribute nutrients through the use of highly soluble commercial fertilizers.

In short, the sources of nutrients in our watershed are many.

Today in Oklahoma, only one of the above mentioned potential sources is regulated and monitored—The poultry industry.

We have recently proposed an extensive plan to address poultry-related nutrient management here in our Scenic River Watersheds. With the state's endorsement, we hope to move forward with this plan.

But a truly comprehensive plan of nutrient management must go beyond one industry and encompass all who contribute to nutrient buildup in our watersheds.

We are making a major effort in our industry to manage nutrients. Now we encourage everyone who has a stake in our land and our waters to join us.

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