JACKSON — The Mississippi Poultry Association has donated 10,000 pounds of chicken and 10,000 eggs to the Mississippi Food Network, which distributes food and household items to people across the state.

The Mississippi Poultry Association plans to make a similar donation annually.

Gov. Haley Barbour chose to give the donation to the Mississippi Food Network for its broad reach across the state.

"With holidays around the corner, please remember our state’s food pantries and shelters when you consider your charitable contributions around Thanksgiving and Christmas," Barbour said. "I applaud the Mississippi Poultry Association for this generous donation to the more than 320 member agencies of the Mississippi Food Network."

Companies each donating 2,000-pounds of chicken include: Marshall Durbin with a Hattiesburg plant; Peco Foods with facilities in Canton, Brookville, Philadelphia, Sebastopol and Bay Springs; Sanderson Farms with plants in Hazlehurst, Laurel, McComb, Collins and Flowood; Tyson with facilities in Carthage, Forest and Vicksburg; and, Wayne Farms with a plant in Laurel. Cal-Maine, which has facilities in Jackson and Edwards, donated 30 cases of eggs.

"The member companies of the Mississippi Poultry Association have been feeding Mississippians and the world for 75 years," said Mississippi Poultry Association chairman Sam LeNarz, who is the Laurel Complex manager at Wayne Farms, LLC. "We thought this contribution coming just before the holiday season would bring attention to hunger in our state and spur other Mississippians to help in battling hunger. We hope this donation to the governor becomes an annual event."

Food pantries and shelters have struggled this year to keep shelves full for families in need. Walker Satterwhite, executive director of the Mississippi Food Network, hopes this donation will spur more gifts to food banks, shelters and other community programs during the holidays. "This significant food donation from Gov. Barbour and the Mississippi Poultry Association will allow us to impact lives when the need for food has never been greater," Satterwhite said. "Donations of poultry and other high-protein foods are especially valuable as they allow us to provide our member agencies with more healthy, nutritious options."