The Mississippi Poultry Association &
Mississippi’s Poultry Industry

Who is MPA?
Members of the Mississippi Poultry Association (MPA) include:
- **Table Egg Company** - Cal-Maine Foods, Inc.
- **Spent Hen Processor** - Southern Hens

**Allied Companies** - Which include grain companies, railroads, primary breeders, banks and other financial institutions, pharmaceutical companies and equipment suppliers who sell equipment and services to processors, egg companies and growers.

- **Growers** - Which includes approximately 900 growers under contract to raise chickens for one of the poultry processors listed above.

**Industry Organization**
**Broilers**: Processing companies are organized around a complex that includes a hatchery, feed mill and processing plant(s). The companies contract with growers who raise chickens on 2000 farms.

The growers are classified in three categories:
1. **Breeder Growers** - raise chickens to produce fertilized eggs for the hatchery.
2. **Pullet Growers** - raise chickens to become breeders.
3. **Broiler Growers** - raise chickens to be slaughtered and processed for restaurants, grocery stores or export.

The broiler company supplies feed and chicks to a grower who raises birds to a specified size depending upon customer and/or company standards. Growers are paid based on pounds.

**Egg Companies**: Cal-Maine, Inc., headquartered in Mississippi, is the largest table egg company in the United States and has farms located across the nation.

**Economic Impact**
Mississippi's top agricultural commodity is poultry. The poultry industry employs 28,000 people directly and another 27,000 indirectly. In 2011, growers were paid $2.4 billion and the industry paid another $1.2 billion in wages and salaries. Mississippi ranks in the top five in the nation in poultry production.

**Growing Demand**
Poultry products are the best positioned protein to meet the global demand for 66 percent more protein that will be required by the world's growing populations and rising income levels by 2050.
**A Little History**

Prior to 1900, most farms raised chickens, but they were not a cash crop. Around this time, poultry associations did exist but were considered more like kennel clubs for chicken fanciers who grew exotic and colorful breeds.

The industry really got its start in 1923 when Mrs. Wilmer Steele received 500 baby chicks instead of 50. Mrs. Steele raised the chicks and sold them for meat; within three years, she was raising 10 thousand birds at a time.

In 1937, the Mississippi Poultry Improvement Association was formed to help battle poultry diseases and to promote the industry that was then composed of independent hatcheries, feed millers, processors, and farmers. Over the last 75 years the hatcheries, feed mills and processing plants were integrated into single companies to better meet consumers needs.

**Mississippi Poultry Product Placement**

Broiler chickens are raised based on customer needs. Fast food restaurants want a 3-5 pound chicken. If a customer wants chicken nuggets, tenders or breast meat, the chickens are 6-9 pounds. Nationally about 55 percent of chicken is consumed by customers purchasing product in grocery stores and 45 percent in restaurants. Mississippi also averaged $285 million in exports of chicken annually from 2009-2011. The top international destinations are Hong Kong, Russia, Cuba, Canada and China.