TAX CUT FOR POULTRY FARMERS, LEADERS IN AG PRODUCTION

by Mark Leggett, President, Mississippi Poultry Association

TAX AFFIDAVIT BENEFITS MPA MEMBERS

Dear MPA Member, Good News! You will no longer have to pay sales tax on your electricity, propane, or natural gas bills starting July 1, 2014. This is a 1.5 percent savings on your energy bills. The Mississippi Poultry Association worked during the 2013 legislative session with the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation and the Mississippi Manufacturers Association to get the tax repealed. The tax cut, for farms and plants, becomes effective for bills you receive in July. To receive your tax exemption, you must sign an affidavit, which you can find on our website www.mspoultry.org or call Bill Rosenblatt to have one mailed to you. You do not have to present the signed affidavit to your utility provider, but you do have to have it on hand to present to them if asked to prove that you are eligible. Also on the website, is a document from the Miss. Department of Revenue explaining the tax change. If you have any questions about this, contact the MPA office at 601-932-7560 or Mark Leggett at 601-259-4659 or leggett@mspoultry.org, Bill Rosenblatt at 601-942-9269 or bill@mspoultry.org, or Becky Beard at 601-214-8883 or beard@mspoultry.org.

CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE: POULTRY IS MISSISSIPPI’S LEADING CROP

Poultry remains Mississippi’s number one agricultural crop, and Leake County is the state’s top agricultural county, according to the 2012 Agricultural Census, which was released last month. (See page 3.)

The Census is conducted once every five years by the United States Department of Agriculture’s National Agricultural Statistics Service. It includes a wealth of data on the number of farms, income from various crops, and information on the characteristics of farmers.

Poultry sales were $2.74 billion in 2012 which is 42.6 percent of the $6.44 billion in total market value of agricultural products sold in the state. The Census of Agriculture does not include forestry.

Of the top 25 counties in agricultural production, 13 of those are counties with significant poultry production. All but one of the others in the top 25 are in the Delta, where row crops provide the majority of the income.

Mississippi has 38,076 farms. The largest number of farms, 13,178, include some cattle and calves. The Census reports 2,742 farms with some poultry sales in 2012. The number of farms includes farms that may sell eggs or chickens, but are not under contract with a poultry company.

Another piece of information from the Census that will be available in July is a look at agricultural products and sales by Congressional District. Mississippi’s 3rd Congressional District led the nation in poultry production in 2007, but all the nation’s Congressional districts have been redrawn since then.

Mississippi again ranks 5th in poultry production in the nation.

Continued on page 3.
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Over 30 years strong.

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### USDA 2012 Census of Agriculture Leading Agricultural Counties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Total Poultry and Egg Value</th>
<th>Total Agricultural Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Leake</td>
<td>$275,215,000</td>
<td>$283,278,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bolivar</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$277,010,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sunflower</td>
<td>$9,000</td>
<td>$273,799,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$271,432,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Scott</td>
<td>$255,369,000</td>
<td>$270,841,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>$238,002,000</td>
<td>$251,063,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Neshoba</td>
<td>$237,943,000</td>
<td>$246,475,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Leflore</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$241,858,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Jones</td>
<td>$201,268,000</td>
<td>$216,976,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Covington</td>
<td>$148,050,000</td>
<td>$203,447,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Simpson</td>
<td>$186,901,000</td>
<td>$202,445,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Wayne</td>
<td>$183,185,000</td>
<td>$194,047,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Coahoma</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$179,579,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Tallahatchie</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>$165,019,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Yazoo</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$151,237,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Noxubee</td>
<td>$24,957,000</td>
<td>$140,253,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Humphreys</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$132,692,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Tunica</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$130,056,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Rankin</td>
<td>$91,880,000</td>
<td>$111,213,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Sharkey</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$108,156,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Newton</td>
<td>$89,552,000</td>
<td>$102,420,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Marion</td>
<td>$84,313,000</td>
<td>$97,307,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Jasper</td>
<td>$91,762,000</td>
<td>$97,173,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Holmes</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$93,441,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Clay</td>
<td>$37,000</td>
<td>$92,255,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### USDA 2012 Census of Agriculture Ranking of Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold in Mississippi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Farms</th>
<th>Sales ($1,000)</th>
<th>Rank by Sales</th>
<th>Percent of Total Sales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poultry and eggs</td>
<td>2,742</td>
<td>2,744,048</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>42.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grains, oilseeds, dry beans, and dry peas</td>
<td>4,190</td>
<td>2,302,071</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton and cottonseed</td>
<td>822</td>
<td>367,847</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle and calves</td>
<td>13,178</td>
<td>332,491</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aquaculture</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>185,241</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hogs and pigs</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>141,139</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other crops and hay</td>
<td>6,318</td>
<td>134,853</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables, melons, potatoes, and sweet potatoes</td>
<td>1,205</td>
<td>82,338</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, and sod</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>61,125</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk from cows</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>42,690</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits, tree nuts, and berries</td>
<td>890</td>
<td>23,771</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horses, ponies, mules, burros, and donkeys</td>
<td>1,903</td>
<td>10,013</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other animals and other animal products</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>9,523</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep, goats, wool, mohair, and milk</td>
<td>994</td>
<td>2,306</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>(Z)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut Christmas trees and short rotation woody crops</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>1,570</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>(Z)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NASS, USDA

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Two of Mississippi’s congressional delegation visited MPA members’ farms in May and June to see the damage from the April 28 tornadoes.

United States Senator Thad Cochran; Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture Cindy Hyde-Smith; Mississippi Senator Giles Ward; and representatives from MPA, USDA, and Farm Bureau met Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Wilkes to better understand the needs of poultry producers effected by the tornadoes.

Senator Cochran walked the desolate site where eight poultry houses once stood, listening to the Wilkes to better understand the needs and services they and others could use. During his visit, Senator Cochran assured the Wilkes he desired to continue his efforts in support of poultry producers.

United States Congressman Alan Nunnelee, along with representatives from MPA, Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), and Farm Bureau, met with Mr. Tim Hobby on his farm to see firsthand the destruction from the tornadoes. Congressman Nunnelee listened attentively as Mr. Hobby spoke about concerns he and other impacted poultry producers have, ranging from loss of income, insurance collection, and debris removal. Mr. Hobby also took the congressman on a tour of his farm to demonstrate the disarray and loss throughout his property. Before leaving, Congressman Nunnelee assured Mr. Hobby and others impacted by the storm of his continual support and desire to proceed on initiatives that will better support poultry producers in future natural disasters.

MPA is grateful for the consistent support of Senator Cochran, Congressman Nunnelee, and our entire congressional delegation for their efforts in assisting poultry producers in times of natural disaster and programs designed for farm enhancement. We look forward to working together in support of Mississippi’s number one agricultural commodity.
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On May 14, 2014, family and friends of Dr. Robert Keirs met at the Hill Poultry Science Department for a reception honoring Dr. Keirs, Associate Professor Emeritus of Veterinary Medicine, and to officially hang his portrait in the Mississippi Poultry Hall of Fame.

Dr. Keirs earned his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from Iowa State University in 1955. He has had an illustrious and successful career that has focused on providing his expertise and knowledge in settings such as private practice, corporate, consulting, and education. In 1981, Dr. Keirs became an Associate Professor at the College of Veterinary Medicine at Mississippi State University. He immediately embraced the pleasures and responsibilities of an educator. Incorporating his private practice, corporate, and consulting experience, Dr. Keirs was able to thoroughly educate his students in addressing and solving the poultry industry’s needs.

Steve McLaurin (Peco Foods), Vice Chairman of the Mississippi Poultry Association, emceed the program. Also sharing memories of working with Dr. Keirs were Orlando Patterson (Tyson Foods) and Patricia Hawkins (Tyson Foods). Mr. Patterson and Mrs. Hawkins reflected upon their time working with Dr. Keirs with some lighthearted stories and voiced their appreciation for the leadership and work ethic that they learned from Dr. Keirs.

Dr. Phil Stayer (Sanderson Farms) and Bruce Rutledge (Ivesco) also shared memories of their time spent with Dr. Keirs. Dr. Mary Beck, Head of the Poultry Science Department, welcomed everyone to the reception and thanked Dr. Keirs for his contribution to the poultry industry. MPA is glad to welcome Dr. Keirs into the Mississippi Poultry Hall of Fame.
It’s time again – time for the MPA annual convention, which means we are making plans. We hope to make this convention special. MPA members, invited guests, and really interesting speakers will once again flock to Florida for some time on the gorgeous Emerald Coast waters for three days of sun, fishing, and golf.

KICK-OFF RECEPTION
We will have our kick-off reception on Thursday night, September 11 at 6:00 p.m. at the popular poolside party. Huge shrimp and other delicious food items on the menu will be ready to kick off the convention as we join our old and new friends to connect and discuss the past years’ events in our industry.

GUEST SPEAKERS
We have two great keynote speakers who include Congressman Steven Palazzo and Congressman Alan Nunnelee. State Senator Giles Ward will be the speaker for the Past Chairmen of the Board Breakfast.

LADIES’ PROGRAM
The Cobb-Vantress, Inc. Ladies Program will be a feature for the ladies this year. Let’s paint like Picasso with Studio by the Sea as our instructor.

TOURNAMENTS
Friday afternoon, golfers and fisherman can load up their carts and boats and go out and compete for great prizes provided by Vendworks, McNeely Plastics, and International Paper Company. All prizes will be awarded on Saturday night at the awards program.

LIVE/SILENT AUCTION
On tap again this year is the Mississippi Poultry Foundation Live and Silent Auction. Our Allied and company members do a great job of supplying auction items, so start shopping or call me, and I will shop for you. Last year, the auctions raised over $18,000. Four scholarships were awarded this year to growers’ children and grandchildren and students majoring in poultry science from proceeds of this auction. In the future, our goal is to be able to provide scholarships to each student majoring in poultry science.

REGISTRATION
Please complete and return the form on page 9 or you may call me at 601-932-7560 and 601-214-8883 or e-mail me at beard@mspoultry.org for registration and reservation information. I will be glad to e-mail or mail a registration form to you. The cost for MPA Grower members, single or couple is $50.00 plus your hotel accommodations. Please note MPA cannot make your hotel reservations. Money will not be refunded after September 1.

ACCOMMODATIONS
Hotel reservations at the Hilton Sandestin can be made online at www.hiltonsandestinbeach.com or by calling 1-850-267-9500. Ask for reservations and mention “MPA” to be certain you receive the $175.00 room rate. The deadline for reserving rooms is August 11, 2014. After this date, if rooms are still available, you may not receive the special MPA rate. Please make sure to book your room well in advance and be sure mention “MPA” in order to receive our special rate.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS
Thursday, September 11
2:00-5:00 pm Registration
6:00-7:30 pm Gold Sponsor Poolside Reception

Friday, September 12
7:30-11:00 am Registration
8:00 am Past Chairmen Breakfast, Senator Giles Ward-Speaker (by Invitation Only)
9:00-11 am Opening Business Session, Awards/Accolades
10:00-11:30 am Cobb-Vantress Ladies Program
Noon-4 pm Vendworks, McNeely Plastics Product Golf Tournament
12:30-5 pm American Packaging Fishing Tournament

Saturday, September 13
8:00 am Allied Industry Committee Meeting
9:00-11 am Business/Board Meeting
Noon-4 pm International Paper Golf Tournament
6:00-9 pm Diamond Sponsor’s Awards Reception and the Silent/Live Auction

I hope to see you in Destin!
Name ________________________________________________ Spouse's Name (if attending) ________________________________________________
Company Name __________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Mailing Address ___________________________________________________ City ________________________ State _______________ Zip ________________
Business Phone ___________________________________ Fax ___________________________________ E-mail Address _________________________________
Name for Badge _______________________________________ Spouse's Name for Badge (if attending) ______________________________________

REGISTRATION FEES: 
( ) Formula/Allied Members Single or Couple ($350.00) .......................................................... $ ____________________
( ) Non-Member Single or Couple ($450.00) ........................................................................... $ ____________________
( ) MPA Grower Member Single or Couple ($50.00) ................................................................ $ ____________________

ACTIVITY FEES: 
( ) Vendworks/McNeely Plastic Products Friday Golf, Raven Golf Club ($150.00) ........................................ $ ____________________
( ) International Paper Saturday Golf, Links Golf Club ($145.00) ..................................................... $ ____________________
( ) Mulligans (4 for $20.00, limit 4 per golfer, 2 per tournament) .......................................................... $ ____________________
( ) American Packaging Friday Fishing Tournament ($225.00) ......................................................... $ ____________________
( ) Cobb-Vantress Ladies’ Program (Please respond by September 5 to register for headcount purposes.) Complimentary

LATE REGISTRATION FEE $75.00 AFTER AUGUST 31 (Due to contractual obligations, no refunds after August 31, 2014.) $ ____________________

CONVENTION REGISTRATION TOTAL $ ____________________

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Type of card ______________________________________________________ Name on Card ______________________________________________________
Account number___________________________________________________ Expiration Date _______________________________________________________

Please indicate your preferred golf foursome below for the Vendworks/McNeely Plastic Products Friday Tournament:
1. ______________________ 2. ______________________ 3. ______________________ 4. ______________________

Please indicate your preferred golf foursome below for the International Paper Saturday Tournament:
1. ______________________ 2. ______________________ 3. ______________________ 4. ______________________

Handicap _____ or Average Score ______

Please mail your registration form, including all activities in which you wish to participate, to:
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MPA had a great turnout with over 250 growers, integrator personnel, and allied members at this year’s spring seminars which took place during the last three weeks of April. To better serve our membership, we hosted the seminars in Ellisville (Jones County Junior College), Wesson (Copiah Lincoln Community College), and Morton (Roosevelt State Park). We had over a hundred growers and service technicians attend at both Ellisville and Wesson, while Roosevelt’s attendance was impacted by the tornadoes that tore through our state.

The theme of the spring seminars was Summer Time Preparation. We were fortunate to have seven well respected speakers travel as far as Georgia and Florida to share their expertise and knowledge to our members. Topics that were discussed include: Miss. Board of Animal Health Biosecurity (Dr. Jim Watson), Miss. Board of Animal Health Review of Composter Functionality (Dr. Jim Watson), Cool Cell Maintenance (Skip Reeves, Reeves Supply Company), Summer Time Ventilation (Dr. Jody Purswell, USDA Agricultural Research Service), Drinker Line Sanitation (Dr. Tom Tabler, MSU), Windrowing Litter (Dr. Morgan Farnell, MSU), and Electrical & Generator Maintenance (Steve Duke and Grant McDonneial of Taylor Power Co.). Also, Byron Erwin with EcoDrum Composting had a booth where growers could speak with him about his composting system. The speakers’ presentations are on the MPA website at www.mspoultry.org.

MPA would like to thank this year’s sponsors: First South Farm Credit (Lunch), Taylor Power Systems (Lunch), Merck Animal Health (Lunch), Ivesco (Lunch), Elanco (Lunch), Jones Hamilton (Lunch), Casco (Door Prizes), Cobb-Vantress (Door Prizes), Georgia Poultry (Door Prizes), First Financial Bank (Door Prizes), General Chemical (Door Prizes), Hydro Systems (Door Prizes), Hubbard (Door Prizes), and L.B. White (Door Prizes).

Thank you for all of those who attended and contributed their financial support, knowledge, and time. Without the help of so many of our members, this year’s spring seminars would have not reached the level of success we had.
The Mississippi Poultry Association exhibited and helped arrange speakers for this year’s Magnolia Beef and Poultry Expo in Raleigh, Mississippi. The event was held at the Smith County Agricultural Complex. Attendees were able to visit with over 20 different organizations, including MPA, who had a wide range of knowledge from cattle and poultry production to agricultural lending. Throughout the day, fun and useful door prizes and promotional items were distributed to guests, along with lunch for those who came with an appetite.

Individuals also had the opportunity to attend seminars on Healthy Heifer Replacements and Pelvic Measurements (Dr. Mark Holland, DVM), Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality Agricultural Permitting (Ms. Tracy Tomkins, Chief of Agricultural Permitting), 2014 Farm Bill Highlights (Mr. Taylor Nicholas, United States Senate Agriculture Committee Staffer), and Genetic Abnormalities in Cattle (Dr. Brandi Karisch, Assistant Extension/Research Professor).

A special thanks to the event’s sponsors, Mississippi State Extension Service: Jasper, Newton, Rankin, Scott, Simpson, and Smith Counties, along with Community Bank for making the Raleigh Expo educationally beneficial, fun, and free!

We enjoyed seeing you all and be sure to come by and see us again next year!

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EVAN MITCHELL UNRUH

Mr. Evan Mitchell Unruh is from Macon, MS. He is the son of Dorsey and Lynda Unruh, members of the Mississippi Poultry Association who grow for Peco Foods. He has completed his senior year at Starkville Academy.

At Starkville Academy, Evan has excelled both academically and in extracurricular activities. Evan is a member of the National Honor Society and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. He placed third in the Mississippi Association of Independent Schools Science Fair in the 11th grade and received the Advance World Geography Award from Starkville Academy.

In his spare time and on weekends, Evan faithfully serves his community. He regularly volunteers with the elderly, has assisted in constructing a Habitat for Humanity house, has participated in helping upkeep the beautiful city of Starkville in Operation Get Swept Up, and enjoys helping with Operation Christmas Child.

Evan plans to attend Mississippi State University where he will major in Chemical Engineering. He hopes to use his degree in helping local Mississippi poultry and row crop producers in continuing to develop new agricultural techniques that will further the sustainability of agriculture in our state.

AMY JOY SEIBEL

Amy Joy Seibel is from Lawrence, MS. She is the daughter of Stanley and Rachel Seibel. They are members of Mississippi Poultry Association and grow for Peco Foods. Amy is currently enrolled for fall classes at Mississippi State University.

Prior to being accepted to Mississippi State, she attended Hesston College and East Central Community College. While attending Hesston College, she was on the Dean’s List each semester and received a scholarship from Hesston’s Business School. She also volunteered extensively as a ministry assistant on campus. Before attending Hesston, she attended East Central Community College where she was a member of the prestigious Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

When Amy begins her fall classes at Mississippi State, she plans on continuing her degree in Accounting. She hopes to one day have her own accounting firm that will contribute to the economic and civic needs of her community.

COURTNEY RENEE WADE

Courtney Renee Wade is from Bay Springs, MS. She is the daughter of Ms. Christie Wade. Courtney is currently attending Mississippi State and majoring in Poultry Science.

Courtney was the Salutatorian at Bay Springs High School and was chosen by her fellow classmates as the Most Likely to Succeed and Most Intellectual of her graduating class. Upon graduating from Bay Springs High School, she attended Jones County Junior College where she was a member of Phi Theta Kappa, Mu Alpha Theta, and Jones County Junior College Ag Science Club.

Upon completing her degree at Mississippi State, she hopes to work in live production, preferably as a service technician in broiler production. Courtney enjoys the idea of her future career because it provides her the ability to help produce an affordable and nutritious quality protein for her community and nation.

HOLLI VIRGINIA NUTT

Holli Virginia Nutt is from Morton, MS. Holli is the daughter of Mr. Danny Nutt. She is attending Mississippi State University, majoring in Poultry Science.

Holli is actively involved in the poultry department where she is a member of the MSU Collegiate Poultry Judging Team that placed fifth in the Arkansas Judging Competition. At the same competition, Holli received Second Place in Individual Egg Production and Quality. Holli is also a student worker for the poultry science department where she assists in setting up mock competitions for poultry judging and helps with recruiting future poultry science majors.

Before enrolling at Mississippi State University, Holli attended East Central Community College. At East Central Community College, she was a member of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society where she served as Public Relations Chair and Secretary, President of the Astronomy Club, and participated in 4-H as a poultry judge. Holli has also volunteered with the Scott County 4-H.
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The tornadoes of April 28 will be difficult to forget for many poultry producers in Mississippi. An estimated 1,044,800 million chickens were lost, along with 58 poultry houses that received severe damage and 17 with minor damage. Poultry producing counties impacted by the tornadoes are Newton, Scott, Winston, and Wayne counties. The largest amount of damage to the industry occurred in Winston.

The Mississippi Poultry Association in conjunction with the Mississippi Board of Animal Health (MBAH), Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), United States Farm Service Agency (FSA), United States Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Small Business Administration (SBM), and integrators have been working closely to identify available resources for poultry producers impacted by the tornadoes. Below is a list of funds and cost-share programs made available to poultry producers. Please note these are brief explanations. For eligibility requirements and the application process, please contact the respective agency that provides the funds and/or cost share program.

FARM SERVICE AGENCY

The FSA has three programs which may help poultry producers impacted by adverse weather: The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), and the Emergency Loan Program.

The LIP provides benefits to poultry and livestock producers for deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by adverse weather. LIP payments are based on 75 percent of the market value, as determined by FSA, of the applicable poultry and livestock on the day before the date of death of the poultry and livestock.

The ECP is designated to provide cost-share assistance to agricultural producers who have suffered severe damage to their farmland because of a natural disaster. For poultry producers, the most likely practice that will be needed is removal of debris from farmland. ECP provides cost-share assistance for eligible expenses related to a natural disaster. It does not pay 100 percent.

The Emergency Loan Program provides emergency loan assistance to help farmers who own or operate farms located in a county declared by the president or designated by the secretary of agriculture as a primary disaster area. These loans are designed to assist eligible producers in restoring or replacing essential property and may assist in payment of production costs associated with the disaster year. In addition, these loans may also be used to pay essential family living expenses.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

The NRCS has a cost-share program, Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), in place to assist growers in the costs of digging emergency burial pits for poultry. Producers will need to visit their local U.S. Department of Agriculture Service Center in their county to sign an NRCS EQIP application. If you have already paid for an emergency burial pit, you will need to produce the following documentation to be reimbursed: Receipt with the cost of digging the pit, the amount (number of birds-Estimate) of mortality placed in the pit. Producers can get the approximate number of birds from their integrators’ records. Provide your FSA Farm Number and FSA Tract Number with a map so that NRCS can provide a GPS number.

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

It is important to abide by all MDEQ regulations concerning debris and rebuilding your poultry houses. In circumstances where a producer needs to bury building debris, MDEQ has issued a waiver to allow a producer to bury his or her debris on property owned by the producer.

If a damaged poultry house structure is still standing or partially standing, the demolition of that structure is likely subject to the demolition notification requirements of the National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (related to the potential for asbestos containing materials in the structure). We encourage the farmer in these scenarios to contact the MDEQ Asbestos Division for Guidance on these types of activities or consult the Asbestos Guidance on their solid waste home page at the following web address: www.deq.state.ms.us/solidwaste (see the bottom 2 documents in the gold shaded area titled “2014 April Emergency Debris Information”).

Producers can also contact, Mark Williams, with MDEQ’s Solid Waste Division. His number is 601-961-5304. If a producer chooses to rebuild his or her poultry houses, we recommend contacting Buster McMillan with MDEQ’s Agriculture Permitting Division. His number is 601-961-5671. He will be able to help producers determine if their current permit is applicable under the producer’s new building plans.

MPA is here to serve Mississippi’s number one agricultural commodity. Please contact Bill Rosenblatt, Grower Relations Coordinator, at 601-942-9269 or bill@mspoultry.org.
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John Milner serves as counsel to the Mississippi Poultry Association and has special expertise in poultry-related environmental issues. Partner Gene Wasson also has impressive abilities in the environmental sector.

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The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) issued a joint proposed rule on March 25 that would interpret the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) to cover all natural and artificial tributaries of streams, lakes, ponds and impoundments, as well as all wetlands, that are adjacent to or near larger, navigable waters. EPA and the Corps also announced an interpretive rule, immediately effective, that clarifies that the 53 specific conservation practices identified by the Agriculture Department’s Natural Resources Conservation Service to protect or improve water quality will not be subject to CWA Section 404 dredge-and-fill permits.

The proposed rule seeks to clarify which waters and wetlands are considered “waters of the U.S.” under the CWA, and therefore within the jurisdiction of EPA or the Corps to require permits, state water quality certifications and oil spill responses under the CWA. The proposed rule is subject to a public comment period for 90 days following its publication in the Federal Register, which was April 21, 2014. The comment period has been extended to October 20.

In a statement released with the proposed rule, EPA stated that the underlying reason for the proposed rule was that “determining Clean Water Act protection for streams and wetlands became confusing and complex following Supreme Court decisions in 2001 and 2006. For nearly a decade, members of Congress, state and local officials, industry, agriculture, environmental groups, and the public asked for rulemaking to provide clarity.”

The EPA statement takes the position that the proposed rule “does not protect any new types of waters that have not been historically been covered under the Clean Water Act and is consistent with the Supreme Court’s more narrow reading of Clean Water Act jurisdiction.”

Significantly, the proposed rule would revise the existing definition of “waters of the United States”. It expands the regulatory definition of a “tributary” of an interstate river, territorial seas and navigable waters. At the present time, “tributary” is defined as having a bed, a channel and an ordinary high water mark. Under the proposed rule, the definition would include tributaries that run through wetlands and bridges, culverts and dams without losing their characteristics. The definition would include lakes, streams, canals and ditches, excluding those ditches that do not contribute flow or have an ephemeral flow or are found in uplands. The definition would also define tributaries to impoundments of interstate waters, territorial seas or navigable waters to be within CWA jurisdiction.

Another significant definition in the proposed rule is the term, “significant nexus”. This term has its foundation in a “test” for the jurisdiction of the CWA that was articulated by Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy in Rapanos v. United States. The purpose of Kennedy’s test was to identify which waters fell under the CWA jurisdiction based on an evaluation of whether a significant nexus existed between the waters being evaluated and downstream navigable waters and wetlands. The EPA proposed rule generally determines that all tributaries of traditional navigable waters and interstate waters, as well as adjacent water bodies, are within the CWA jurisdiction because they share a significant nexus to traditional navigable waters. Additionally, EPA and the Corps have asked for public comment on how it should go about evaluating, on a case-by-case basis, whether some wetlands and smaller waters, including prairie potholes, playa lakes, mudflats and sandflats, have a significant nexus to navigable waters.

A group of Republican senators, in an April 3 letter to EPA Administrator McCarthy, expressed strong opposition to the proposed rule, which they interpreted to “significantly expand [EPA] permitting authority over American farmers, construction workers, miners, manufacturers and private landowners, among others, by unilaterally changing the definition of ‘waters of the United States’ under the Clean Water Act. We believe this proposal will negatively impact economic growth by adding an additional layer of red tape to countless activities that are already sufficiently regulated by state and local governments.” Specifically, the letter criticized EPA’s proposed definition of “significant nexus”, stating that it is “vague enough to allow EPA to assert jurisdiction over waters previously not regulated, rather than to curtail its jurisdiction, as the agency asserts.”

The senators’ letter also accuses EPA of having “reckless disregard for the science that will apparently underpin this ruling”. They claim that the report on which EPA bases its proposed rule, “Connectivity of Streams and Wetlands to Downstream Waters: A Review and Synthesis of the Scientific Evidence”, has not been finalized or peer reviewed by the EPA Science Advisory Board. Consequently, the senators request that EPA withdraw the proposed rule until the report is finalized. They state that failure to do so “puts the legitimacy of the Report, and thus, the underlying science of the rule, in doubt, and creates the impression that the EPA intends to finalize this rule on its own whims, rather than on the validity of the science.”

The Association should seriously monitor this significant proposed rule through its Environmental Committee in order to evaluate its impacts on the members and to determine whether comments should be filed during the 90-day public comment period that currently expires on October 20.
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Infectious bronchitis is a highly contagious disease that involves the respiratory and urogenital tract of chickens and is caused by the infectious bronchitis virus (IBV). This virus is ubiquitous in most parts of the world where poultry are reared and is able to spread very rapidly in non-protected birds. It is shed via both the respiratory tract and the feces, and the virus can be acquired following inhalation or direct contact with infected birds, or by contact with contaminated litter, equipment or other contaminated materials. In young growing chickens, IBV causes respiratory disease that may predispose bacterial complications, and poor economic performance. Some strains of IBV replicate in the kidneys and cause renal induced mortality. In layer and breeder chickens, egg production and quality declines may be observed, because the virus replicates in the oviduct causing permanent damage.

Although strict biosecurity is a very important way to control IBV, vaccination is an essential tool to increase the resistance of the chickens against challenge with IBV. However, IBV is extremely difficult to control because this virus has the capability to change therefore different types of the virus (also known as serotypes or variants) may be present in the field. In some cases, vaccines do not provide adequate protection if the field virus is different from the virus present in the vaccines.

Before the winter of 2013, the most frequently detected serotype in Mississippi was Arkansas DPI. In 2008, our laboratory reported that about 89% of the IBVs detected in Mississippi corresponded to Arkansas DPI, other serotypes present were Massachusetts and Connecticut. However, from the beginning of 2014 to the date of this report, that situation has changed, a new IBV serotype known as Georgia 08 is being detected in Mississippi, approximately 40% of the IBV isolates detected in our laboratory corresponded to this new serotype.

First identified in Georgia in December 2007, the Georgia 08 IBV variant has also been isolated on farms in Alabama, Tennessee and Kentucky. Over the past two winters, its incidence and severity have increased dramatically. This Georgia 08 variant primarily affects the lower respiratory tract, particularly the air sacs. Birds affected with Georgia 08 present mild mucoide tracheitis, conjunctivitis and air sacs with foam, or heavy white-gray suds or with “cheesy” material in severe cases (Figure 1). Furthermore, the Georgia 08 strain can cause losses due to secondary infections from harmful bacteria such as E. coli. It seems that this virus is not highly virulent but can induce severe condemnations.

The inflammation of the air sacs is called airsacculitis and is frequently observed in birds infected with Georgia 08 IBV, and it is a major cause of condemnation at the processing plants. Moreover, airsacculitis increases the time for processing due to the additional measures needed to process affected birds, therefore, reduces line and plant efficiency.

In response to the presence of this new serotype in our state, some companies have modified their vaccination schedules and have included GA-08 in their programs. The use of vaccines including new IBV serotypes should be monitored closely and carefully, and the introduction of new serotypes should not be considered as a permanent or long-term solution. It is very important to keep monitoring the changes in the field IBV isolates and the vaccination schedules should be re-adapted according to the situation of IBV on the farms.
Rodents, such as rats and mice, are a major concern on poultry farms due to building damage and feed loss. Poultry houses are attractive to these unwanted guests because they provide an almost unlimited supply of the three basic requirements that a rodent needs: harborage (places to hide and nest), food, and water. Rodent populations usually remain low if one or more of these items is missing in an area. Unfortunately, because poultry houses usually have all three items in abundance, preventing rats and mice from moving into the poultry house is an ongoing challenge.

Both rats and mice can enter a hole large enough to pass their head through, as small as a quarter-inch for mice or a half-inch for rats. Once inside the house, they can easily burrow into the loose, dry poultry litter, under caked litter, into dirt floors, inside walls, and into insulation in the walls and ceiling.

Possibly, the most obvious problem with rodents is the feed they consume and contaminate. All rodents will eat poultry feed, and they contaminate and ruin much more than they eat. An adult rat eats about 1 to 2 ounces of feed each day, whereas a mouse will eat far less, about 0.1 ounce per day (Hoelscher, 1997). That doesn’t sound like a lot of feed, but a large rodent population may eat several tons of feed each year.

Dollar losses from feed eaten or contaminated are difficult to estimate. However, if one rat eats 1 ounce of feed per day, that is 23 pounds per year. If a rat eats 2 ounces of feed per day, that is 46 pounds per year. If there are 200 rats present (not a major infestation for a large poultry house) and each one is eating 46 pounds of feed per year, that is 4.6 tons of feed! If feed costs $300 per ton, the cost would be $1,380, or $6.90 per rat! This is just the dollar cost of lost feed to the integrator. It does not include your cost in lost feed conversion and the negative impact this will have on where you rank on the settlement sheet. In addition, feed contaminated by rodents significantly adds to this loss. Berry (2003) reported some USDA estimates of the actual cost of rats’ feed wastage and damage is as high as $25 per rat per year.

Physical damage to the building and equipment is another way rodents cost growers money. Rodents gnaw on support structures, plastic curtains, cool cell pads, egg belts, insulation, and wiring, and they burrow under walls and concrete walkways, causing shifting and cracks (Berry, 2003). Operational shutdowns or power failures due to electrical or mechanical malfunctions as a result of rodent damage can cost an operation thousands of dollars and the possible loss of an entire house of birds in only a few short minutes. Gnawing on electrical wiring is a fire hazard that could burn the house down. Rodent damage may start small but quickly develop into a major problem that will be costly to correct.

COMMON RATS AND MICE IN POULTRY HOUSES

You must know which rodent(s) you are dealing with in order to implement an effective control and eradication program.

The Norway rat has a large, thick body that measures 7½ to 10 inches in length with a tail length of 6 to 8½ inches (slightly shorter than its body). An adult usually weighs 10 to 17 ounces. It can climb when necessary but is primarily a burrowing creature and prefers to live in a burrow 8 to 18 inches below the ground. The rat varies in color from brown to gray and has a blunt snout, small eyes, and small ears. The droppings are usually capsule to spindle shaped and are approximately three-fourths of an inch in length with blunt ends. The Norway rat is sometimes called by several other names, including sewer rat, brown rat, house rat, common rat, wharf rat, or barn rat.

The roof rat seldom burrows in the ground and, compared to the Norway rat, has a more slender, graceful, and streamlined body, a more pointed snout, and larger ears and eyes. Its tail is longer than its body (total length of 13 to 17 inches). Droppings are smaller than those of the Norway rat and are spindle to sausage shaped with pointed ends. It is sometimes called the ship rat or black rat. Aside from these differences, Norway and roof rats are similar. Because their front incisor teeth grow an average of 5 inches per year, rats gnaw almost constantly to keep them worn down.

Rats usually feed once or twice during the night. They have a home range of approximately 100 feet and often live in colonies, with several rats sharing the same feed and water source (Berry, 2003). Rats reach sexual maturity at 2 to 3 months of age and have a gestation period of 21 to 25 days. The young are weaned at 3 weeks old, often just before the arrival of a new litter. A female can mate as soon as one day after giving birth. If fertilization does not occur, she will come into heat about every 5 days. In natural conditions, many die, but in a year, as many as 60 to 70 offspring from one female may mature.

The house mouse is a brownish to grayish rodent. The adult mouse is 5½ to 7½ inches long including the 3- to 4-inch tail. The house mouse has a small
Sanitation and rodent-proofing are both important to prevent an infestation or remove one if an infestation currently exists. If shelter and nesting sites are provided, rodents will gladly accept the invitation and move in. However, a clean, well-maintained operation exposes rodents to predators and exposes their activities (burrows, trails, and so forth) to you.

Keep the grass mowed and trash and clutter from collecting around the houses. Maintain at least a 3-foot space around the perimeter of the poultry house that is free of brush, trash, weeds, and so forth. This will allow you to easily check the outside of the building for potential pathways, burrows, and rodent activity. Clean up feed spills inside and outside the house promptly. **Totally rodent-proofing a poultry house is not possible, but you can make it difficult for rodents to gain entrance.** Make sure load-out and walk-in doors close and seal properly. Check that corrugated metal siding is sealed, and make sure corner seams are tight. Properly seal openings surrounding feed augers, water lines, and electrical conduits that enter the house from outside.

**RODENTICIDES**

A wide variety of rodenticides (poison baits) are available. Rodenticides may be formulated as bar baits, pellets, concentrates, or tracking powders.

**Bar baits** are formulated with a rodenticide, various grain products, and a binder with a high wax content that allows the product to withstand moisture for long periods. They usually come in bar or chunk form. **Pellets** are the poison formulation mixed with grain and a binder that holds the pellet together. **Concentrates** are often powders and are designed to be mixed with feed or water. **Tracking powders** are formulated with talc or some other inert ingredient. They should be spread along rodent pathways. Rodents pick up the poison on their feet, fur, and tails as they move along the pathway and ingest the poison while grooming. Tracking powder is regulated and its use is restricted to those individuals qualified to handle the product.

Please read and follow the label the rodenticide you choose to use. All rodenticides are poisons at various level for poultry, livestock, non-target wildlife, and humans. Rodent control effectiveness will depend on monitoring and evaluation of the control program by individuals responsible for program implementation. If these individuals are motivated and have a strong interest in achieving success, the rodent control program will be successful. However, it takes effort on the grower’s part because there are several possible reasons why a rodenticide might fail, including these:

- Too few bait stations (match stations to home range of rodents)
- Too small a control area
- Too short an exposure time to the bait
- Too much access to other food supplies
- Insufficient bait (failure to monitor and adequately stock bait stations regularly)
- Wrong bait choice or old, moldy, unappealing bait (rotate baits; check twice per month)

Use gloves when dispensing bait for your own protection and to prevent human smell on the bait, which may cause rodents to avoid the product. Be sure to have plenty of bait stations by, keeping in mind the home range of both rats and mice.

**SUMMARY**

A rodent control program that includes sanitation, rodent-proofing, population reduction, and evaluating and monitoring the rodent situation should be a critical part of every poultry farm’s biosecurity and overall management program. **Rodent infestation can put a major dent in feed conversion numbers because of feed lost due to consumption and contamination.** Good housekeeping (keeping grass mowed and removing clutter from around buildings) will help keep the rodent challenge at a minimum. Monitor the situation and maintain a control program that includes permanent bait stations and rotating rodenticides on a regular basis. Various rodenticides are available to assist with a rodent control program. Match the correct rodenticide to your particular situation and take proper steps to prevent rodenticide failure. Program failure can usually be traced back to human error and not to the rodents. Your local poultry supply store should carry rodenticide and can offer advice on a rodent control program. Remember that rodenticides are poisons and must be respected and handled responsibly and in accordance with label instructions for the protection of humans, poultry flocks, non-target wildlife, and the environment.

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Spring classes at Mississippi State are out and summer school is about to start. Poultry Science has its first-ever summer class this year. Historically, colleges of agriculture didn’t have summer classes because everyone went home to farm during the summer months. That’s changed, of course, and so we’re venturing into this new arena. The class Dr. Sharma is teaching this summer is PO 4990/6990, Special Laboratory Techniques in Poultry Science, and is designed to introduce students to practical, hands-on applications that will enhance their skills going out into industry positions. Topics to be covered include in-ovo vaccination, measuring shell quality, identification of common parasites and histology/cytology, isolation of Salmonella and Campylobacter, ELISA tests for pathogens, microbiology monitoring, litter testing (moisture, dust), water quality testing, ammonia and light measurements, biosecurity, backyard and organic poultry management, and avian zoonoses. This class will meet daily for the first summer session for 2 hours of lecture and 3 hours of lab. It will be a challenging course but one that will greatly benefit our students.

Mississippi 4-H is once again in full swing, with state judging contests for seniors just over and regional contests for juniors underway. Jessica Wells is in charge of all of the contests, so she’s keeping very busy these days! The Chain Project is also underway for the third year. There was a 75 percent increase (from 129 to 225!) in 4-H’ers and FFA’ers participating this year; some of this increase is likely because of the inclusion of FFA for the first time. The number of counties participating in the Chain this year increased by 30 percent. We’re trying hard to raise money to fund prizes and to ensure buyers for the birds at auction at the State Fair.

The department hosted its semi-annual Industry Advisory Board meeting on June 5 in Starkville. Topics for discussion included the feed mill project – strategies for acquiring equipment, a new position description for a poultry products and processing Extension person that will be submitted to the administration for consideration shortly, the Voluntary Contribution Program, and a plan for initiating information seminars for prospective poultry growers looking for financing. Interactions with this group – including representatives of all the poultry companies in Mississippi as well as the Farm Bureau Federation, the MPA, and BankPlus – has been exceedingly helpful to us during the rebuilding of the department over the last two years. We appreciate the time and effort of these industry representatives to come to Starkville and give us their counsel and advice.

At the research farm, we continue to renovate and reconfigure buildings to enhance our ability to provide timely data to the industry as well as to ensure high quality delivery of educational programs to students and clientele. The project for this summer is conversion of part of the old student house into a mini broiler barn, complete with a programmable junior Rotem controller courtesy of Diversified Imports. This will allow the broiler production class to acquire hands-on experience running an actual broiler barn that will give value added to their education at Mississippi State.

As always, we appreciate all of the support and encouragement from our industry partners in Mississippi and hope the summer is a good one for our state.

Photos from www.poultry.msstate.edu
UPCOMING EVENTS

BREEDER SEMINAR – AUGUST 5
8:00 a.m. – Veterinary Diagnostics Lab – Pearl, MS

BREEDER SEMINAR – AUGUST 6
8:00 a.m. – Collins Community Center – Collins, MS

MPA 77TH ANNUAL CONVENTION – SEPTEMBER 11-14
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(See pages 8-9 for details)

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