Look for baby chicks on television in 2011. MPA and Farm Bureau members Scott and Brett Smith will be spokesmen for poultry farmers everywhere when they appear in commercials starting in February.

The two brothers, who have a 12-house farm in Lincoln County, were chosen to appear in the second round of Farm Families of Mississippi television and radio commercials. MPA made a contribution to the Farm Families effort overseen by the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation.

Brett and Scott are Sanderson growers who also raise shitake mushrooms and beef cattle on their 1,100-acre farm. “We were glad to be chosen to participate in these commercials. As members of the Mississippi Poultry Association and the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation, Brett and I were glad to invite the video crew into our poultry houses so we could show other Mississippians a farm family at work,” said Scott Smith.

The advertising campaign began in 2010 as an effort to explain that farmers are good stewards of the land, that they take care of their animals, and that they provide safe, affordable food. The 2010 campaign featured a beef cattle, dairy cattle, and row crop farmers on television, radio, and billboards. Research before and after the advertising campaign showed it was effective in changing public perception about farmers.

The initial research showed that Mississippians have a generally favorable perception of farmers, but the three topics above – environmental, animal welfare, and food costs – were areas where more education was needed.

“To influence public perception, a consistent, sustained communication program is required and should keep in focus the long-term goal of creating positive public perception of agriculture in Mississippi,” said Donald Gant, chairman of Farm Bureau’s Communications Committee. “We don’t need someone else telling agriculture’s story. We need to tell it ourselves and be united in that effort. That’s what Farm Families of Mississippi is all about.”

MPA joins the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation and numerous other agricultural associations, companies, and individuals in supporting the effort. Other Mississippi agricultural commodity groups sponsoring include the following associations or promotion boards: the Cattlemen’s, Pork Producers, Beekeepers and Seedmen’s associations, as well as the Rice, Soybean, Corn, and Peanut promotion boards.

Poultry is the state’s number one agricultural commodity representing almost half of the state’s agricultural output in 2009, according to data from Mississippi State University.

Farm Families of Mississippi was formed for the specific purpose of promoting Mississippi agriculture to the general public. Educating those who benefit from agriculture – but are not actively engaged in farming – is a priority, because without an appreciation of what it takes to provide the food, fiber, and energy that we all use, the uneducated tend to dismiss agriculture as unimportant.

You can watch the 2010 commercials online at www.growingmississippi.org.
Introducing a new biological tool to fight coccidiosis - New HATCHPAK® Cocci III from Merial Select.

HATCHPAK® Key Advantages:

- Only coccidial vaccine in the USA to offer genetically stable precocious strains of *Eimeria*.\(^1\)
- Proven efficacious: stimulates the bird’s natural immune response.\(^2\)
- Aids in the prevention of coccidiosis caused by *Eimeria acervulina*, *tenella* and *maxima*.
- Administer to day-old chicks via coarse spray cabinet in the hatchery.
- Biological alternative to feed additives and other pathogenic strain coccidial vaccines.
- Convenient 5,000 and 10,000 dose sizes fit most vaccination programs.

Value Beyond The Label. Don’t Just Choose a Product, Choose a Company.

1. Merial Study #00-126.

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The U.S. poultry industry, the largest in the world, must overcome a number of obstacles at home and abroad to maintain that position, said speakers at the MPA Convention who weaved together the impressive history of the global broiler industry and the challenges it faces in coming years.

Larry Higdem with Agri Stats, statistical research and analysis firm, compared Mississippi to the United States to show that Mississippi is 8 percent of the nation’s broiler industry when looking at the number of chicks, tons of feed, live pounds, or eggs.

Higdem, an account manager with Agri Stats, said feed is the poultry industry’s major challenge at the moment. Since October 2006, feed ingredients have added $14.7 billion in additional costs to the broiler industry. Corn stocks relative to use of corn have been on a three year slide from a high of just under 15 percent to about 8 percent of stocks. This comes as China is increasing its corn usage and buying 42 million bushels from the U.S. in 2009-10. Add this to the increasing amount of corn diverted to ethanol and Higdem said to expect volatile markets over the next few months.

Jim Wayt with Intervision Foods, a Georgia company involved in exporting poultry worldwide, put the U.S. dominance in the broiler industry in perspective for the audience. He said The USA is the largest broiler producer in the world in 2009 at 22.2 percent. China, whose importance in the global poultry trade is increasing daily, comes in second at 16.9 percent.

The U.S. consumes more broilers than anyone at 12.9 million tons, with China a close second at 12.2. About 22 percent of the U.S. broiler production is shipped overseas, making the U.S. the largest poultry exporter with 38.5 percent of the world market. Brazil is number two at 35.8 percent.

World demand for broiler meat has grown since 1992, but the rate of growth has slowed since 2004.

The 2009 U.S. export numbers will be lower in 2010, because the Russian market was closed a large part of the year to U.S. poultry. Surprisingly, the other markets have bought more U.S. chicken to lessen the impact of the Russian ban, said Wayt. Total U.S. broiler exports have increased rapidly from 500,000 tons in 1990 to 3.5 million tons in 2009.

Broiler exports to Russia have seen numerous peaks and valleys since 1992. Exports hit 1,000 metric tons again in 2008. Both Russia and China want to build their own domestic broiler production and reduce their purchases from the U.S.

The U.S. poultry industry is globally competitive, said Wayt, who has been involved in exporting since 1991, but the biggest problem facing U.S. firms is keeping markets open to American poultry. He said that eventually China will grow to become America’s largest market.

As the U.S. struggles to keep markets open overseas, the poultry industry must deal with increased activism by U.S. government agencies and the American public’s changing worldview, which Paul Pressley, U.S. Poultry & Egg Institute vice president, called the “changing social contract.”

One of the most activist regulatory agencies in the current administration is the Environmental Protection Agency. USPOULTRY and the National Chicken Council have sued the EPA over guidance on its concentrated animal feed operations that would declare feathers and dust coming from poultry house fans a pollutant.

The EPA took over state control of efforts to establish a TMDL (total maximum daily load of various pollutants that a body of water can carry) for the Chesapeake Bay. The federal agency set a December 31 deadline to develop a TMDL that will likely limit poultry litter’s use as a fertilizer in Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania. This TMDL will be used as model for other watersheds, he said.

Pressley said the changing social contract, people’s perception of what is good and bad, and what they expect out of companies and other institutions is a factor with which the poultry industry must deal. People are more likely today to believe that:

- “Bigger is badder,
- Organic/free range is better,
- Economics or efficiency is not considered, and
- Distrust of science and technology.”

Of all the challenges listed above, this perception issue could be the most serious challenge facing the industry, because strong science, increased efficiency, and economies of scale have made the U.S. poultry industry the world’s model.
DESTIN, which never lets us down, once again put on a great show for all of the MPA events. Blue skies, white sand, beautiful blue water, and no oil in site, was the setting for the 73rd MPA Annual Meeting in Destin, Florida.

Three hundred MPA members came together at the Hilton Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort in September to celebrate old and new friendships. This year, there was a good mix of allied members, grower members, and company members attending the festivities. However, we continue to invite more grower members to join the fun. Last year 275 attended.

On Thursday, we kicked off with registration where we got to visit with some folks we haven’t seen since the year before. It is always fun to reconnect. Around 6:00 p.m., we all met poolside for the Gold Star Sponsor Reception. Although the weather was a little warm for September, there was a breeze blowing that made the atmosphere just right to enjoy great food and conversation.

Friday morning meetings began with Dr. Ryn McDonald as chairperson of the board taking the lead and welcoming everyone to the meeting. Dr. McDonald is the second woman to hold this distinctive position following in the adept footsteps of Dr. Yvonne Vizzier Thaxton. Mark Leggett, MPA President, gave a short welcome, and then Mr. Paul Pressley with the U.S. Poultry & Egg Institute and Larry Higdem with Agri Stats spoke. (Summaries of their comments and those of Jim Wayt of Intervision Foods, who spoke Saturday, are in the Presidents Report on page 3). Rounding out the morning meetings were special recognitions of scholarships, sponsor thank you’s, and the introduction of the Mississippi State University poultry science students.

On Friday afternoon, the fishermen left the docks with six boats loaded with enthusiasm. The tournament sponsored by American Packaging Company and The Vincit Group was a great success with many fish caught and a huge number of prizes waiting to be awarded.

The Past Chairmen of the Board and the 2010 Board of Directors enjoyed hearing from Senator Dean Kirby of Pearl, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, who gave them a quick legislative update and outlook.

The MPA Ladies were cruising on the bay on board The Solaris for the annual Cobb-Vantress Ladies Program. Ladies, if you missed the trip, we welcome you to join us next year. Cobb-Vantress puts on a great show with spectacular door prizes, great food, and good entertainment. All the ladies left with bags of gifts and a promise to do it all again in 2011.
Golfers were treated to the Raven Golf Course for Friday afternoon’s tournament sponsored by McNeely Plastics and Vendworks. Saturday afternoon golfers enjoyed Bayside course at the tournament sponsored by International Paper. Over 100 golfers participated. Saturday morning was also the annual Board of Directors meeting.

Saturday night’s Diamond Star Sponsor Reception was a very busy time. Tournament prizes were awarded, great foods and drinks were plentiful, and everyone was in a good mood as they milled around the silent auction placing their bids on the many great items.

I think the highlight of the convention was the live auction that got started with auctioneer Joe Joe Brown’s lively antics. The silent and live auction raised $17,600 for the MS Poultry Foundation which sponsors scholarships for our grower members’ children and grandchildren. It is our hope to keep our industry strong with our future generation being able to attend college like the 17 poultry science majors that were in attendance at the convention this year.

The final highlight of the convention was the induction of the late Dr. J. Paul Thaxton into the Mississippi Poultry Hall of Fame. Dr. Thaxton’s wife, Dr. Yvonne Vizzier, his daughter Paige Burke, and her family were all in attendance. Dr. Thaxton’s portrait will hang in the Hall of Fame Room in the Hill Poultry Science Building at Mississippi State University with his 26 predecessors.

Make plans to attend the 74th annual convention again in Destin in September of 2011.
New Chair and Vice Chair for 2011

Sam LeNarz, complex manager for Wayne Farms, LLC, in Laurel will take over January 1 as the chairman of the Mississippi Poultry Association, and Ray Ables, live complex manager for Tyson Foods in Forest, will become vice chairman.

LeNarz replaces Dr. Ryn Laster McDonald, director of food safety at Jackson-based Cal-Maine Foods, who was the second woman to head the Association founded in 1937. Dr. McDonald’s mentor and Ph.D. advisor, Dr. Yvonne Vizzier-Thaxton, was the only other female chair.

Sam, a native of White Hall, Arkansas, attended the University of Arkansas majoring in business administration. He has worked in the poultry industry for 33 years with several large poultry companies while holding various positions in the plants and live operations.

He has been the complex manager in Laurel since July 2009. He lives in Petal with his wife Andra of 33 years. They have two sons, Zachary, 27, a third-year law student at Temple School of Law in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Andrew, 23, who is in the accountancy graduate program at Ole Miss. Sam likes to duck hunt and play golf.

Ray Ables, who was raised in Fort Payne, Alabama, graduated from Auburn University with a major in poultry science and a minor in business. He began working at various positions in a processing plant before moving to broiler service.

Ables bought and operated his own broiler farm during this time. In 1998, he became broiler manager in Albertville, Alabama, spending three years as broiler manager and three as breeder hatchery manager. In 2004, he took a position as live production manager at Tyson’s Springdale, Arkansas, complex before moving to his current job in 2007.

Ray and Jennifer, his wife of 16 years, live in Brandon with their two children, ages 9 and 13.

Grower Relations Coordinator

MPA Grower Relations Coordinator J.D. Sumrall has taken another job, and the Association is working to fill this important position.

J.D. resigned on October 1 to take a job with a poultry supply company in the Laurel area where he grew up. He began working for MPA in January 2007 after graduating from Mississippi State University with a poultry science degree. MPA wishes J.D. and his son Landon well in this new endeavor.

The Grower Relations Coordinator works closely with the Grower Advisory Committee which offers advice to the MPA Board and staff, plans seminars, and is directed by the Miss. Poultry Foundation Board to select scholarship winners. The coordinator also recruits grower members to join the Association and serves as an information resource for grower issues.
Something to crow about

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We understand your risks and your needs. That’s why we offer AgriChoice® farm insurance products that are tailored to meet your needs.

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The two MPA fall grower seminars in Philadelphia and Raleigh drew 65 growers, sponsors, and other interested parties to hear about cold weather concerns, including:

- Litter Management by Dr. Trish Marsh-Johnson from Jones-Hamilton Company
- Ventilation and energy use using the new Mobile Environmental lab by Dr. Jody Purswell with the USDA’s Agricultural Research Service at Mississippi State University and Dr. Jeremiah Davis with the MSU Agricultural and Biological Engineering Department.
- Cold stress and its effects on bird health by Dr. Aaron Keiss with the MSU Poultry Science Department.


MPA is planning a series of seminars in the spring on summertime subjects. We will let you know as soon as the details are complete.

GROWERS GET ANSWERS AT FALL GROWER SEMINARS

By Mark Leggett
MPA President

Dr. Jeremiah Davis with MSU’s Agricultural and Biological Engineering Department shows several interested growers the inside workings of the Mobile Environmental Lab

Dr. Jody Purswell with USDA-ARS demonstrates the Mobile Environmental Lab to growers at the recent meeting held in Raleigh.

Dr. Aaron Keiss with the MSU Poultry Science Department addresses growers about cold stress and its effects on bird health.

Dr. Trisha Marsh-Jones with Veterinary & Environmental Technical Solutions gives growers an update on Litter Management.
The Gehl 1640E Skid Loader was designed with quality in mind. There are few tasks this loader cannot handle.

- Rated operating capacity of 850 pounds and lift height up to 96 inches
- Super-compact 36-inch width with 5.70 x 12 tire option, or 42-inches with 8.50 x 12 heavy-duty flotation tire option
- Power-view® lift arm provides strength, durability and excellent view of the tires and sides of the loader
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In February 2009, the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) added a new requirement to the Dry Litter Poultry Animal Feeding Operation (AFO) Multimedia General Permit. Poultry growers must now provide contiguous landowners with notification before constructing new facilities or expanding existing facilities. This new requirement has seemingly opened the flood gates to contiguous landowners submitting objections to MDEQ for any application related to new or expanded facilities. The good news for poultry growers is that the Permit Board rarely denies a permit if the application is complete, all affected parties have been notified, and MDEQ has conducted a satisfactory site inspection.

A CASE EXAMPLE
Complaints and objections related to new or expanded dry litter poultry AFO facilities include concerns about stormwater drainage polluting local creeks, steams, and water bodies, the nuisance of insects, declining property value, offensive and strong odors, and health concerns. For example, at the MDEQ Permit Board meeting in October, a contiguous landowner addressed the Permit Board requesting that a permit not be issued because her child has severe asthma. The mother of the child presented a letter to the Permit Board from the child’s pediatrician, enlisted the support of the state representative of the county, and made a desperate plea to the Permit Board to save her son from such an unhealthy environment. In response, the poultry grower applicant presented the Permit Board with a letter from the pediatrician’s supervisor stating that construction of the poultry houses on the adjoining property could in no way exacerbate the child’s asthma condition. After several questions from the Permit Board to both parties and assurance from MDEQ staff that the site inspection and application met all permitting requirements, the Board voted to approve the application. MDEQ legal staff then informed the mother about how to appeal the decision by the Permit Board.

THE NUMBER ONE CONCERN OF CONTIGUOUS LANDOWNERS
MDEQ staff reports that concern about “odor” from the facility is the number one concern of contiguous landowners. In fact, MDEQ often receives letters objecting to permit approval and complaining of “odor” before application by the poultry grower has even been made to MDEQ. Yet, “odor” cannot be regulated at this point in the permitting process before the facility is even constructed or expanded. In determining approval of an application regarding “odor,” the factors considered include the number of complaints received or the number of petitioners alleging that such a condition exists, the frequency of the occurrence of such substances in the ambient air as confirmed by MDEQ, and the land use of the affected area. Such factors can only be determined after a facility is in operation and seeks a renewal of its permit.

RESPONSIBILITY TO THE CONTIGUOUS LANDOWNER
The objections mentioned above may be an extreme, but true, example of objections encountered in the permitting process for new or modified facilities. Under MDEQ

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regulations, any contiguous landowner must be notified about a new or expanded facility. Only “certified-return receipt requested mail” is acceptable for notification, and the applicant must retain the “returned receipts” for a period of five years. Failure to notify the contiguous landowners may cause denial or revocation of coverage. Once notified, the contiguous landowner has 17 days to submit comments to MDEQ regarding the proposed permit.

Notification of the contiguous landowners certainly invites comments from residents in the area, but the poultry grower is also required to have a notice published two times in a locally-distributed daily newspaper. The poultry grower must also send the first public notice, a copy of the Draft Permit, a cover letter, and a library acknowledgement to the local library. Such requirements ensure public participation in the permitting process. Therefore, it is no surprise that the majority of applications for new or modified facilities meet with objections from some in the community.

MDEQ provides the applicant with a model letter for any contiguous landowner. The letter reads:

(Name of Applicant) is proposing to construct and operate a Dry Litter Poultry Animal Feeding operation. Such construction and operation will involve the management of animal waste and may involve discharge of storm water involving the clearing, grading, and excavation of land or the operation of air emissions equipment. This notification is to provide you with an opportunity to comment to MDEQ regarding the granting of coverage.

The average resident or contiguous landowner likely feels obligated to provide MDEQ with some kind of comment after receiving such a letter. The letter informs the recipient that if no comments are necessary, then there is no need to respond. Nevertheless, most recipients respond, likely for fear of losing their “opportunity” to comment. The recipient may feel that failure to comment at this juncture may waive any right to comment later regarding compliance by the applicant.

**CONCLUSION**

Since February 2009, MDEQ staff has presented the MDEQ Permit Board with an average of two to three applications per month for new or expanded facilities. Addressing public comments and objections from some in the community to these new or expanded facilities has become the norm during Permit Board meetings. MDEQ staff noted that, in recent months, only two applications submitted to the agency received no comment from contiguous landowners.

Lately, more comments and objections have been alleging health concerns, such as allergies and/or respiratory problems. Such comments must be considered by MDEQ, an agency charged with protecting the health and welfare of the public. Consequently, if an applicant wants to construct a new facility or expand an existing one, objections and comments from contiguous landowners should be expected. Nevertheless, if the poultry grower has met the specific obligations required by MDEQ, the Permit Board will more than likely approve the permit application for a new or expanded facility.
Many positive things are happening at MSU this fall! With a winning record, the football team is headed to a bowl game. Off the gridiron, the Department is setting standards of its own. This fall saw seven new freshman enroll in Poultry Science. This may be the highest freshman enrollment ever, since most students come in as transfers. Also, we had a total enrollment of 47 undergraduates, another increase from previous years.

As many of you know, we have had several vacancies over the past few years due to retirements, deaths, and transfers. I am pleased to announce that we have two new positions advertised and another soon to be advertised. The areas of expertise are poultry products and nutrition/management, and the third is a joint position with the Agricultural and Biological Engineering Department to address poultry housing issues. These three faculty will join the existing six faculty as we rebuild a science-based service department.

In addition, we are making plans to further develop a Poultry Center of Excellence that will span various disciplines across the University. The Center will be housed in the Poultry Science Department with expertise from departments across campus as well as the Southeast U.S. Department of Agriculture Poultry Research building.

Finally, we are again progressing with the Joint Agricultural Research Service/MSU Poultry Science building to be located at the corner of Farm and Blackjack Roads. Plans are being restructured to allow for the complete relocation of MSU’s Poultry Science Department along with the majority of the ARS scientists. We expect groundbreaking to occur sometime this coming fall with occupancy in 2013.

We are proud of our rich heritage of service to the poultry industry and feel the best way to honor that legacy is to continue to build upon it in the future to sustain that service for generations to come. We appreciate the support we get from all our alumni and industry friends. Thanks for what you do for MSU and GO DAWGS!

WHO CARES?

Who cares that one extra egg, one extra chick, or one extra kilo of weight gain, will make the difference between profit and loss in the poultry world this year?

Alltech does!

In fact, so do the 2,200 people worldwide, committed to producing and managing Alltech products. Our range of patented, high quality, safe and natural ingredients can help improve feed quality, animal health, food safety and industry profitability.

Alltech is the world leader in providing natural solutions to the poultry industry.

So the next time you ask the question, who cares? Remember at Alltech…
You can expect some tense times at the Capitol in 2011, because money is very tight, it is an election year, and it is time to draw new legislative districts. All of these are likely to put legislators on edge as they consider issues that they dealt with in 2010.

The budget is forecast to be extremely tight. Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour told state agency directors to prepare for a 15 percent cut, but members of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee say that is too drastic and smaller cuts will be needed this year, which will be the third year that slumping revenues have led to budget reductions. The last fiscal year, Governor Barbour cut budgets five times. This year the state is losing $400 million in federal stimulus funds.

MPA will be watching closely what happens in budgets for Mississippi State University, especially as it impacts the Poultry Science Department and the Veterinary School. The Board of Animal Health and the Egg Marketing Board are two state agencies we are watching.

The 2011 elections have already had an impact on legislators. Governor Barbour, who cannot seek a third term, is considering a run for president, which opens the race for governor and a line of dominoes begin to fall. Lieutenant Governor Phil Bryant will run for governor and other state elected officials and legislators will seek that open position. Look for every proposal and vote to be tinged with political advantage or loss whether intended or not as an aid to someone’s campaign.

Lawmakers hope to get the 2010 Census data in January or February so that they can begin dividing the state into 122 House districts and 52 Senate districts. Expected population losses west of I-55 and south of I-10 are balanced by large gains in DeSoto, Rankin, Madison counties, as well as in areas north of the Coast, such as Pearl River, Stone, Lamar, and Forrest counties. Also, legislators who have announced their intention to retire or seek higher office provide those drawing the maps an opportunity to make significant changes to the lines.

The biggest question is the relationship of districts to the elections. Will legislators run in 2011 and again in 2012 as was the case in 1991 and 1992 when the redistricting went to court? You can expect a much more involved Republican party and the continued interest of the Legislative Black Caucus in picking up seats.

Some of the issues likely to resurface in 2011 include:

- **Increased penalties for animal cruelty, especially relating to dogs and cats.** There were hearings during the summer 2010.

- **Continuing the Department of Employment Security.** This has become an annual battle between those who want to raise unemployment benefits and those who want to make the agency permanent so this battle doesn’t happen again.

- **Tax increases are not expected even though some in the House have floated the idea.** Senate Finance Committee Chairman Dean Kirby who spoke at the MPA Convention said no tax increase would make it through his committee.

The 2011 session begins January 4 and is scheduled to end April 2.
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Regardless of the size of the project, we can meet your needs and exceed your expectations!

Thank you again for allowing us to be a part of the Mississippi Poultry Association family. If I can assist you in any way, please give me a call to discuss how we can put our 63 years of experience to work for you.

From the Burch family to yours, we wish you a safe and happy holiday season and a prosperous New Year.

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*Director of Business Development*  
bartsmith@burchcorp.com  
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Litter material for broiler production has become increasingly expensive and difficult to obtain. Pine shavings have been the preferred material in the Southeastern U.S. for many years, but reductions in timber production, improved lumber milling techniques, and potential markets in biofuel production will likely make shavings very expensive. Any alternative materials for litter to replace pine shavings must be locally available in sufficient quantities to keep costs affordable.

Many alternative litter materials have been evaluated including crop residues, wood by-products, sand, and various combinations of waste materials. Cereal crop residues have provided several reliable litter alternatives in places where these crops are raised and can be transported economically. Rice and peanut hulls are currently used successfully in broiler growout operations in areas where those crops are grown. Past research has shown that other crop residues, such as rice hull ash, chopped corn cobs, and corn stover, are comparable to pine shavings.

Grass and cereal grain straw have also been used as litter materials. Wheat straw is common in the Pacific Northwest and research has shown that the length of chop (less than one inch) was the most important factor in successful use. Chopped Bermuda grass hay has been successfully used in rearing hen turkeys in North Carolina. Bermuda grass is common throughout the Southeast, and due to the interest in bio-renewable energy sources, efforts have been directed at developing high-yielding energy grasses, such as Switchgrass and Giant Miscanthus, for the Southeastern U.S. These forage crops may be a potential source of litter material for poultry producers.

A recent joint research project conducted by collaborators from Mississippi State University Agricultural & Biological Engineering Department, Poultry Science Department, and the USDA-ARS Poultry Research Unit evaluated chopped grass for use as a litter material. Floor pen trials were conducted to compare live production and processing characteristics of birds raised on chopped switchgrass, chopped bermudagrass, and pine shavings. Grass for the trials was harvested from MSU pastures, baled, and chopped in a hammer-mill with a quarter-inch screen. Litter was spread in floor pens to an initial depth of 3.5 inches. Birds were placed into the pens as day-old chicks and processed at 49 days. Measurements included body weight, feed conversion, carcass yield, and foot pad condition scores. Birds raised on both grass litter types performed as well as birds raised on pine shavings. No differences were found in body weights, feed conversion, carcass yield, or foot pad condition scores.

Switchgrass has been shown to yield 8–12 tons per acre per year in Mississippi. Bulk density of chopped switchgrass was found to be 9 pounds per cubic foot. Filling each 1000 square feet of floor area to 4 inches of depth would require 3,000 pounds of switchgrass. If we assume a Switchgrass yield of 8 tons per acre, the following amounts of hay and acreage would be required for a typical poultry house:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>House Size</th>
<th>Square Footage</th>
<th>Tons Required</th>
<th>Acres per House</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40 x 500</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 x 500</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Poultry producers could grow the high yielding grasses on available land or purchase hay from local growers to fill their litter needs and used litter material could be used to fertilize grass for additional litter material. However, the grass must first be chopped before use as a litter material, and MSU researchers are currently evaluating different methods for chopping and spreading grass litter material in broiler houses and crop nutrient values from used grass litter.

Figure 1: Chopped Switchgrass, Chopped Bermuda grass and Pine Shavings at day of chick placement.

Figure 2: Chopped Switchgrass, Chopped Bermuda grass and Pine Shavings at day 49 of flock.
WHAT IS COCCIDIOSIS?
Coccidiosis is a disease caused by a microscopic parasite. Even though there have been major advances in genetics, nutrition, management, and therapeutics, this disease is still one of the most common and expensive diseases of the commercial poultry industry. Of all the potential parasitic infections, this is the most important one for commercial poultry.

HOW IMPORTANT IS THIS DISEASE?
Considering the effects of this disease from two perspectives, its severity is staggering. In the United States, the annual losses attributed to coccidiosis have been estimated at about $700 million USD; on a world-wide basis this figure grows to an estimated annual loss of $1.5 billion USD. The costs of prevention and treatment add approximately $90 million USD to the U.S. figure and $300 million USD to the worldwide figure.

HOW DO CHICKENS GET THIS PARASITE?
The disease develops after the birds ingest the parasite’s “eggs,” known as oocysts, from the environment. These oocysts enter the bird’s digestive system where the infective stages of the parasite are released to invade the lining of the intestinal tract. At the completion of the parasite’s life cycle, more oocysts are produced and released from the intestinal cells into the feces. Once they are expelled into the environment, they can become infective for other host birds.

HOW DOES THIS PARASITE SPREAD FROM BIRD TO BIRD?
This parasite has a direct life cycle that involves fecal-oral transmission. This means that after an oocyst is shed in the feces of a bird and reaches its infective stage in the litter, it is ready to be picked up and swallowed by another bird to begin its life cycle again. Birds infected with this parasite may shed oocysts into the environment for days. Therefore, contaminated feces on boots, clothing, equipment, etc., can be the source for the spread of this disease to other houses or farms.

WHAT ARE THE CLINICAL SIGNS OF COCCIDIOSIS?
HOW DOES IT AFFECT MY BIRDS?
After parasitizing a chicken, the coccidia derive their food from the bird. If the level of infestation is low, the visible
effects on the bird may be imperceptible. However, higher levels of infestation can result in a variety of signs including watery to bloody diarrhea, pale legs, unthrifty birds with ruffled feathers, poor feed conversion, decreased weight gain, poor flock uniformity, and possibly even mortality.

WHAT LESIONS ARE SEEN AT NECROPSY?
All lesions of coccidia in chickens are found in the intestinal tract from the upper small intestine to the lower large intestine and the cecae. The location and appearance of the lesions are specific for the species of coccidia involved. These lesions can include small white spots, small spots of hemorrhage, ballooned intestines, and frank hemorrhage into the lumen of the intestine and/or cecae. The severity of the lesions can be monitored periodically at necropsy sessions to help evaluate the status of the infection in a flock and/or complex.

HOW IS THIS DISEASE CONTROLLED?
Control of coccidiosis is usually accomplished by either feeding one or more anticoccidial products or vaccinating the embryos or the chicks.

1) Anticoccidials are products that can be added to the feed to inhibit the development of many stages of the parasite in the intestines of the chicken. Since the mid-1930’s, many products have been introduced and utilized in an effort to control coccidia. For reasons of safety, efficacy, and economics, some of these products have been more successful than others. As a result, today’s poultry industry has a relatively short list of anticoccidial products to use in the feed. In an effort to maximize the efficacy of the available products, the commercial industry employs a number of program strategies to control coccidiosis. A program utilized during a grow-out cycle could:
   a) include the use of one or more anticoccidial products;
   b) vary the anticoccidial dosage;
   c) positively or negatively impact the next grow-out’s exposure.

2) Vaccines can be included among the strategies to control coccidiosis. Vaccines employ the use of live oocysts of selected species of the coccidian parasite. Chicks usually receive the vaccine by in-ovo injection (for the embryo) or at one day of age. By either route, the efficacy of the vaccine depends on the chicks swallowing the live oocysts so the organism can develop in the intestine. This controlled exposure through multiple life cycles of the parasite eventually results in the development of immunity to the coccidian parasite.

WILL IT AFFECT PEOPLE, DOGS, CATS, CATTLE OR HORSES?
In general, many species of animals can be affected by coccidian parasites. However, these parasites are usually species specific. This simply means that the coccidia from one species of animal do not affect another species of animal. Therefore, the coccidia that infect chickens do not infect people, dogs, cats, cattle, or horses.

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www.MSPoultry.ORG  19
Since some Mississippi integrators are requiring windrowing, MPA worked with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to provide cost share assistance for windrowing.

The conservation benefits of windrowing were discussed during the September meeting of the State Technical Committee and the group unanimously approved it being offered as a practice using EQIP funds. Randy Pettus with Sanderson Farms and Ray Ables with Tyson helped explain windrowing requirements to NRCS staff prior to the meeting.

Sign up is continuous meaning a producer can sign up for the practice immediately. Applications are being accepted at local NRCS field offices, and the applications will be ranked and funded as money is available.

The windrowing cost share program will pay for windrowing after every third, fourth, fifth, or sixth flock. The cost after every third flock will offer a cost of $15.80 per 1,000 square feet to base applicants or $28.50 per 1,000 square feet for historically underserved farmers.

Historically underserved producers consist of 3 categories: Beginning Farmer (BF), Limited Resource Farmers (LRF), and the Historically Underserved (HU). The unit of compensation approved applicants receive is based on the category (base or HU) under which they qualify.

Also, the EQIP program will offer assistance on storing litter in large grain bags and bailing litter in bags of 3,000-pound bails. The cost share on this practice is $1.93 per ton (base) or $3.48 if you are an historically underserved farmer (HU). This practice is ineligible for those individuals who already have dry stacks.

The primary purpose of this practice is to provide storage for manure that has been transferred from an area of high concentration of manure to a location of low concentration of manure.

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U.S. Poultry and Egg Association Awards Grant to MSU Poultry Science Department

Mississippi State University’s Poultry Science Department recently received over $17,000 in support from the U.S. Poultry and Egg Association’s Ford Foundation to further enhance their ability to train future industry leaders. MSU was one of six universities nationwide to receive the grant funds which are to be used to further student’s abilities to gain important skills through activities outside the classroom, such as:

- Support FFA and 4-H State Poultry Judging Contestants,
- Develop Poultry Educational Team to Talk With Consumers About Poultry,
- Sponsor Poultry Leadership Conference for Teens,
- Talk to Farm Bureau Ag in the Classroom Program, and
- Judge Poultry Shows at County Fairs.

Funding was recently presented to Dr. Benjy Mikel (center), Interim Head, by Larry Gandy (right), USPEA Board Member and Mark Leggett (left), President of the Mississippi Poultry Association.

First Financial Bank/Mississippi Poultry Association Scholarship Winners Chosen

First Financial Bank in Carthage provides funding for the Mississippi Poultry Association to award four scholarships totaling $1,500 per year to poultry science students at Mississippi State University. A faculty committee chooses the recipients.

The winners of the 2010 fall scholarships are Sara Wade and Matt Whiteman. The presentation was made by MPA Chairman Dr. Ryn McDonald and Billy Mack Stuart of First Financial Bank at the recent Mississippi Poultry Association’s 73rd Annual Convention.

Sara is a senior poultry science major from Laurel, Mississippi, who is active in the Poultry Science Club. Her concentration is in pre-veterinary medicine. Sara received a $250 scholarship.

Matt of Dalton, New York, is the president of the MSU Poultry Science Club. A poultry science major with a concentration in poultry business management, Matt received a $500 scholarship.

First Financial Bank also awards two scholarships of the same amounts during the spring semester at Mississippi State University. This is the second year of the FFB-MPA scholarship program.

Foundation Board Approves More Help for More College Students

The Mississippi Poultry Foundation Board has approved a tripling of the scholarship money that the MPA Grower Advisory Committee awards each year.

Starting next year, the Committee will award four scholarships of $1,500 each. The committee, composed of 12 growers, had been awarding two $1,000 scholarships for the last three years.

The Foundation raises money through the annual silent and live auction at the MPA Convention and through donations.

Children and grandchildren of MPA members are eligible to compete for the four scholarships. If you have a child or grandchild who is a high school senior or a student in a Mississippi university or community college, urge them to fill out an application at www.mspoultry.org. Grade point average, an essay, community involvement, knowledge of the poultry industry, and references are among the factors considered by the Grower Advisory Committee as directed by the Foundation in awarding scholarships.

Time is short. The deadline has been moved back to March 1 to ensure that the scholarship can be announced in time for the 2011 high school graduation ceremonies.
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The MPA Membership Drive for 2011 is underway! Join us by going to our website, www.mspoultry.org, where you can print the application and mail it to our office. You may also call us and join over the phone at 601-932-7560. MPA is set up to take checks and credit cards. The Emerging Trends newsletter alone is worth more than the $30 price of your dues.

Your company service technicians will also be mentioning to you about joining or continuing your membership. Please let your service technician know what you want to do so that we can get your names added to the database for you to receive mail outs in a timely manner.

We want to make sure everyone has the opportunity for their voice to be heard and to take advantage of membership opportunities, including making sure you are represented in regulatory and legislative matters.

We appreciate our members and the input you have provided over the years. We understand fully the challenges you face as poultry growers, and we continue to seek your guidance and opinions while we look for ways to help make your farms operate as stress free as possible.

If the Association has missed contacting you, you can become a member by simply completing the form below and mailing it to us. If you have any questions about our organization and membership, feel free to contact us at 601-932-7560 or e-mail beard@mspoultry.org or leggett@mspoultry.org.

YES! I would like to become a member of the Mississippi Poultry Association!

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MS POULTRY ASSOCIATION
2011 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE
By Becky Beard, MPA Administrative Assistant

Brunini’s environmental team is “one of the premier practices in the state” and represents major manufacturers and private industry clients.

Brunini has considerable expertise in environmental litigation, regulatory permitting and compliance issues as well as due diligence and transactional matters. John Milner was noted by Chambers USA as being “instrumental in developing Brunini’s environmental practice” into the leadership position it holds today.

John serves as counsel to the Mississippi Poultry Association and has special expertise in poultry-related environmental issues. Partners John Brunini and Gene Wasson also have impressive abilities in the environmental sector.

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SAVE THE DATES

You Must Sign a New Affidavit in January to Get 1.5 Percent Sales Tax Rate in 2011!

Don't forget that in January you will have to sign a new affidavit to receive the 1.5 percent sales tax rate on farm tractors and farm implements used directly in the production of poultry, ratite, domesticated fish as defined in Miss. Code Ann. Section 69-7-501. The purchases must be used in your farming operation. The affidavits are good for one calendar year.

Check the MPA website, www.mspoultry.org, for the 2011 form. Fill it out and return it to us, or complete one where you purchase items for your farm.

2011 Magnolia Beef & Poultry Expo

The 2011 Magnolia Beef and Poultry Expo will be held on APRIL 7 at the Smith County Ag Complex in Raleigh, Mississippi. This event includes a trade show and offers educational seminars for beef and poultry producers.

If you want to join the Mississippi Poultry Association as a Grower Member, call the MPA office at 601-932-7560 for more information!