The 2011 Legislature increased the amount of money available in the Emerging Crops Loan Program, kept funding for agricultural units at the same level as this year despite dipping revenues, authorized counties to bury poultry in an emergency or disaster, and made sure agricultural practices were not part of a stronger dog and cat cruelty law.

**EMERGING CROPS LOAN PROGRAM EXPANSION BEGINS JULY 1**

The Legislature doubled the amount of money available through the Emerging Crops Loan Program, but at present, there is only a two-year window for the expanded program unless lawmakers amend the law to extend the new program.

HB 1148, which takes effect July 1, revises the procedures and qualifications by which the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) will award no-interest loans to individuals engaged in agribusiness or greenhouse production horticulture enterprises for the next two years. Poultry is included under agribusiness enterprise. The amendments authorize MDA to make loans to such business enterprises for new construction, upgrades, renovations, repairs, and improvements to equipment with a maximum aggregate amount of loans received by any single business enterprise not to exceed $400,000, provided that:

- With respect to a new project, the loan shall not exceed 20% of the total cost of financing sought or $200,000, whichever is less; and,
- With respect to an existing agribusiness or greenhouse production horticulture enterprise for upgrades, renovation, repairs, and improvements to equipment, the loan shall not exceed 30% of the total cost of financing sought or $200,000, whichever is less.

All repayments of loans shall be deposited into the Emerging Crops Fund. On July 1, 2013, the program reverts back to the original mode of loan procedures and qualifications for new construction and for purposes of upgrades, renovations, repairs, and improvements to equipment, with a maximum aggregate amount of loans received by any single business enterprise not to exceed $200,000.

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Dean Kirby of Pearl, Senate Agriculture Chairman Cindy Hyde-Smith of Brookhaven, and House Agriculture Chairman Greg Ward of Ripley pushed the bill, also supported by MDA and the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation, to passage.

The Mississippi Poultry Association lobbied for the increased loan amounts and will lobby to get the repeal date of 2013 removed in the next legislative session. The market-driven program has been a factor in Mississippi becoming the fourth largest poultry producer in the nation.

According to MDA, approximately:
- $68 million in bonds have been issued for the program.
- $150 million in total loans have been made since 1990. This is a revolving loan program so as loans are repaid there is more to loan.
- More than 3,350 loans have been made since the start of the program.
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¹ Merial Study 95-174MS, data on file
² Merial Studies rBD/MD-04-97, rBD/MD-05-98, rBD/MD-06-98, rBD/MD-07-98, rBD/MD-10-98, rBD/MD-11-98, rBD/MD-12-98, rBD/MD-13-98, rBD/MD-04-99, rBD/MD-05-99, 98.319, data on file
PRESIDENT’S REPORT:
Congressional Delegation Supports Poultry

By Mark Leggett
MPA President

Any trip to Washington is usually sharing a few brief bullet points with a congressman or his staff before heading to another meeting at the next congressional office. In April, the National Chicken Council (NCC) brought industry executives and state association leaders to meet with the congressional delegations of poultry states.

As always, this year’s event was well-planned by NCC staff and productive, but reconnecting with the Mississippi delegation was more meaningful for me as we discussed issues that impact the poultry industry. We discussed federal regulations from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), trade agreements to increase U.S. chicken exports, and, of course, ethanol in our visits.

Our meetings in Washington were with people who had strong connections to the Mississippi Legislature. New Congressmen Alan Nunnelee of the 1st District and Steven Palazzo of the 4th District were most recently a state senator and a state representative, respectively. Both have hit the ground running with strong staffs. We met with Michael Janus, Palazzo’s chief of staff, also a former legislator. Representative Gregg Harper’s staff includes former staffers from Lieutenant Governor Phil Bryant’s office. On the Senate side, we met with U.S. Senator Roger Wicker, who was a former state senator in Jackson before he won election to the U.S. House and then the U.S. Senate. Senator Thad Cochran’s agricultural staff person, Carlisle Clarke, son of Mississippi State Senator Buck Clarke of Hollandale, spoke with us.

All of Mississippi’s congressmen and senators understand the importance of the poultry industry as the state’s largest agricultural industry to the state’s economy. The numbers are impressive: more than 45,000 jobs; 1,800 farms; and 22 plants. The numbers are also three times what they were in 2005 before that mandate. The ethanol industry has a guaranteed market for their product – oil companies are paid 45 cents per gallon to blend it into gasoline, and the industry is protected from competition with a 54-cent tariff on foreign ethanol. After 30 years, ethanol needs to stand on its own as a fuel. The Senate voted 73-27 in June to immediately end ethanol blenders tax credit and the import tariff, due to expire in December. Mississippi’s senators were in the minority.

As a way to expand the corn supply, we urged that Congress add some flexibility to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) by allowing farmers, in response to market conditions, to grow grains on some CRP land that is not environmentally sensitive. MPA, the Mississippi Cattlemen’s Association, and the Mississippi Pork Producers Council support the option.

We thanked Representatives Harper, Nunnelee, and Bennie Thompson for signing onto a letter urging the USDA to withdraw the GIPSA rule and start over for several reasons. The agency went beyond congressional direction, did not do an economic analysis, and went against court decisions in its attempt to increase federal regulation of poultry contracts. The NCC estimates the proposal would cost the industry $1 billion over five years.

Another federal agency, the FDA, regulates antibiotics given to poultry. You wouldn’t think it would be required, but Congress is considering needed legislation to require the FDA to base any of its regulations, rules, or guidance on sound-science rather than on emotion or examples of other countries. MPA supports this sound science requirement. No studies have shown a link between antibiotics given to chickens and antibiotic resistance in humans.

Looking more globally, approximately 20% of Mississippi poultry is exported. If other countries would open their markets, the amount of Mississippi chicken going global could increase. MPA urged our delegation to support trade agreements with Columbia, Panama, and South Korea, which could double U.S. exports to those countries.

We all need to say thank you to our Mississippi congressional delegation for understanding the importance of what you do and working to protect Mississippi’s largest agricultural industry.
EMERGENCY LIVESTOCK BURIAL AUTHORIZED

Starting July 1, boards of supervisors are authorized to bury livestock or poultry using county road equipment and employees in the event of a man-made or natural disaster, epidemic, or other emergency. The restrictions are:

- A concentrated animal feeding operation must contain at least 10,000 head of poultry per house.
- The supervisors must spread on its minutes an order declaring that it will be the policy of the board to bury poultry.
- State Board of Animal Health regulations shall be followed.
- The supervisors must obtain the owner's permission and a release from liability.
- The poultry or livestock must be buried on the owner's property.

Senators Perry Lee, R-Mendenhall, and Representative Andy Gipson, R-Braxton, were authors of the two poultry burial bills. The Chairmen of the two County Affairs Committees; Senator Nickey Browning, D-Ecru, and Representative David Gibbs, D-West Point, were instrumental in the bill's passage.

AGRICULTURAL BUDGETS KEEP LEVEL FUNDING

As the 2011 legislative session drew to a close, balancing the budget grew extremely difficult as the Governor and lawmakers bargained over how much in reserve funds to spend to shore up what agencies budget. MPA, Farm Bureau, and other groups signed onto a letter to Governor Barbour and legislative leaders asking for level funding for the agricultural units at Mississippi State University, including the College of Veterinary Science. The Poultry Lab in Pearl that is part of the Vet School has played a vital role battling the LT outbreak this year. The final agricultural budgets contained the same amount for fiscal year 2012, beginning July 1, as they did for the year ending June 30.

AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES PROTECTED IN PET BILL

The Dog and Cat Pet Protection Act took effect in April when signed by the governor. Four places in the bill say the measure is “only for the protection of domesticated dogs and cats” and “shall not be construed as applying to any other animal.”

The bill maintains exemptions in current law for killing a dog that is chasing or killing livestock or poultry. It contains exemptions for animal husbandry, veterinary practices, research, butchering, and processing animals for food.

Simple cruelty to a dog or cat carries a fine of up to $1,000, up to six months in jail, or both. Torturing, mutilating, maiming, or burning a dog or cat is aggravated cruelty with penalties of up to $2,500, up to six months in jail, or both. A second offense of aggravated cruelty within five years results in maximum fines of $5,000 and five years in prison.
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The MPA staff and committees are working hard to bring you a great 74th annual meeting in Destin, Florida. We hope you decide to make it your family vacation. Bring the kids and come on down to the sugar-white beaches and beautiful emerald waters. Since this is an election year, we have invited some Mississippi elected officials as our speakers.

The meeting will kick off on Thursday, September 15 at 6:00 pm with a huge poolside reception. Cold drinks will be ready for the attendees at this meet and greet session. If you like huge, succulent, boiled shrimp, then this reception is the place to be. Of course, there are plenty of other great heavy hors d’oeuvres to satisfy your hunger. This reception is a time to reconnect with friends and colleagues whom you may not have seen since last year’s convention.

On Friday morning, meet us downstairs for a continental breakfast before the meetings and speakers begin the day. We have invited Governor Haley Barbour to be our keynoter. Winners of the primaries for lieutenant governor and the commissioner of agriculture and commerce will be speaking throughout the meetings.

Friday morning is not just for the business attendees. The Annual Cobb-Vantress Ladies’ Brunch is scheduled for 10:00 am. Once again, we will be sailing on the bay onboard the beautiful Solaris. We have great gifts for the ladies, so please make your plans to join us.

On Saturday, we will hear from Gene Gregory, President of the United Egg Producers, about public perception of agriculture.

On Friday afternoon, golfers and fishermen can load up their carts and boats and go out and compete for wonderful prizes provided by Vendworks, LLC, McNeely Plastics, Inc., International Paper Company, American Packaging, and the Vincit Group. These prizes will be awarded on Saturday night at the awards program.

On tap this year is the Mississippi Poultry Foundation Live and Silent Auction. Our Allied and company members do a great job supplying auction items. Last year we raised over $17,000 for scholarships to growers’ children and grandchildren as well as poultry science majors at Mississippi State University. This year we have awarded four $1,500 scholarships. Bring your pocketbooks or donate an item to put in the auction to help make our scholarship fund grow. Contact Becky Beard at beard@mspoultry.org or 601-932-7560 to donate an item.

As Saturday night’s activities wind down, everyone starts to talk about next year’s meeting. 2012 will be the Mississippi Poultry Association’s 75th Anniversary. We have battled many roadblocks in our industry – from high grain prices, high gas prices, diseases, and other things but we have survived by working together to form ONE INDUSTRY – ONE ASSOCIATION. Please start making plans to be with us next September so we can make our 75th Anniversary spectacular!
SCHEDULE OF EVENTS
Thursday, September 15
2:00-5:00 pm Registration
6:00-7:30 pm Gold Star Sponsor Poolside Reception

Friday, September 16
8:00 am-12 noon Opening Business Session, Awards/Accolades
10:00-11:30 am Cobb-Vantress Ladies “Brunch on the Bay”
on board the Solaris
12 noon-4:00 pm Vendworks, McNeely Plastics Product Golf Tournament
12:30-5:00 pm Fishing Tournament

Saturday, September 17
8:00-11:00 am Business/Board Meeting, Keynote Speaker
12 noon-4:00 pm International Paper Golf Tournament
6:00-9:00 pm Diamond Sponsor’s Awards Reception and
the Silent/Live Auction

REGISTRATION
To register, call Becky Beard at the MPA office at 601-932-7560 or email beard@mspoultry.org. The cost for an MPA single or couple is $50.00 plus your hotel accommodations.

RESERVATIONS
In order to make your reservations, you must call the HILTON SANDESTIN at 850-267-9500 or 1-800-367-1271 or visit www.hiltonsandestinbeach.com. Be sure to mention “MPA” to receive the special room rate. The deadline for reserving rooms is August 14, 2011. Your room rate is $169.00 per night.

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Why are this year’s elections the most important in at least 20 years? The legislators you elect in 2011 will decide whether we return to the days of runaway lawsuits, whether government grows or shrinks, whether we work to bring businesses in, or send them fleeing for the borders.

Federal courts last month let the voters decide on redistricting. When the Mississippi Legislature could not agree on a redistricting plan, the issue went to federal court. Rather than mandate new district maps as several parties in the lawsuit proposed, the court told legislators to run in the existing districts, drawn in 2002, and settle the matter legislatively next year. Legislators elected this November will draw districts that will determine who you can vote for in the next decade.

Why is redistricting so important? Who represents you is determined by what district you are in; what district you are in is determined by the maps the Legislature draws. And your vote will determine who is in the Legislature to draw those maps.

The way this should work is that areas that lose population lose representation, and areas that gain population gain representation. Sounds simple, doesn’t it? What threw the whole process into court was the House of Representatives’ attempt to make as few changes as possible to keep districts where people no longer lived and not put them where people had moved.

Redistricting went to court in 1991 when the Census numbers were also delivered the same year as the elections. Lawmakers ran in 1991 and again in new districts in 1992. In their order last month, the federal judges in the 2011 case did not answer whether lawmakers would run in new districts in 2012 or four years from now.

This year, you also will be filling the top two open slots – governor and lieutenant governor – with people who could serve eight years of the coming decade. The state treasurer and the commissioner of agriculture and commerce are the other two open positions among statewide races. A total of 27 seats in the Legislature are open seats this year. Since 1976, that number has ranged from 12 to 46.

Another open position is that of Speaker of the House. When House Speaker Billy McCoy, D-Rienzi, announced his retirement in May, it was the starting gun for a race for leader of the 122-member House. The Speaker appoints committee chairman, names the members of committees, assigns bills to those committees, and presides over the House. In 2008, McCoy was elected to his second term by a 62-60 vote after two earlier tie votes by his fellow representatives.

In the Senate, the lieutenant governor has the same powers over committees and in presiding that the Speaker does in the House. The race for lieutenant governor will be decided August 2 in the Republican primary between either current State Treasurer Tate Reeves or Senate President Pro Tempore Billy Hewes of Gulfport.

Emily Wagster Pettus with the Associated Press pointed out recently that this is the first time since 1976 the governor, the lieutenant governor, and the speaker will all be new to their jobs.

So, bottom line: your vote matters to the direction of this state. But you can only vote if you register by noon on July 2.
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The Mississippi Poultry Association welcomes Ben Chandler as the new grower relations coordinator.

Ben is a recent graduate of Mississippi State University. While at MSU, he studied agribusiness, economics, and general business. Through his education, he gained a great deal of knowledge about production economics, farm management, agricultural policy, and environmental issues. Ben believes that having a working knowledge of these areas will serve him well as the grower relations coordinator.

Ben grew up in Madison County where he attended Madison Ridgeland Academy. He played sports in high school where he helped his team to a football state championship. This allowed him to gain confidence and leadership skills that will help him throughout his career.

Ben established strong relationships with the faculty in the MSU Agricultural Economics Department as a student. Since he started at MPA on May 16, he has visited with faculty in the MSU’s College of Veterinary Medicine and Department of Poultry Science, and toured processing plants, hatcheries and feed mills and poultry farms.

“I look forward to gaining a better understanding of the poultry industry at the state and national levels in order to better address the needs of the growers. I am excited about this opportunity and look forward to meeting and assisting MPA members,” he said.

You may contact Ben at chandler@mspoultry.org or call 601-932-7560.

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On March 15, 2011, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit struck down portions of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) 2008 Clean Water Act (CWA) concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs). Those regulations required CAFOs which discharge, or propose to discharge, pollutants to the waters of the United States to obtain a CWA National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit with effluent limitations and other requirements for controlling water pollution from animal manure and other CAFO wastes. This action by the court essentially reins in EPA for overreaching its authority under the CWA. Petitioners challenging EPA’s 2008 regulations in National Pork Producers Council v. EPA include the U.S. Poultry & Egg Association and the National Chicken Council. Although the Fifth Circuit decision greatly impacts EPA’s authority under the CWA, Mississippi is not expected to experience significant changes in permitting requirements or regulations.

BACKGROUND

The CWA prohibits the discharge of pollutants from a “point source” into waters of the United States without a valid permit. CAFOs, facilities where animals are confined and fed and maintained for a total of 45 days or more in any 12-month period, are explicitly included in the CWA’s definition of a “point source.”

EPA enacted the first set of CAFO regulations in 1976. These regulations remained unchanged until 2003 when EPA was sued for failing to revise the effluent limitations for CAFO operations. In EPA’s 2003 revisions to the rule, all CAFOs were required to apply for an NPDES permit whether or not they discharged. Several parties challenged the 2003 revisions in Waterkeeper Alliance, Inc. v. EPA. In Waterkeeper, the Second Circuit held that the CWA does not authorize EPA to require CAFOs to obtain NPDES permits unless there is an actual, rather than a potential, discharge.

EPA responded to the decision in Waterkeeper with a 2006 proposed regulation that amended the “duty to apply” rule by requiring only CAFOs that “discharge or propose to discharge” to apply for NPDES permits. In 2008, EPA supplemented and finalized this rule by reiterating that nutrient management plans (NMPs) are an enforceable part of an NPDES permit. Under the 2008 rule, a CAFO can be held liable for failing to apply for a permit, in addition to being held liable for a discharge itself. Certification is voluntary, but if a CAFO does not certify, in an enforcement proceeding for failing to apply for a permit, a CAFO would have the burden of proving that it did not propose to discharge. Following this 2008 rule, both industry and environmental groups petitioned for review in the Fifth, Seventh, Eighth, Ninth, Tenth, and D.C. Circuits. These lawsuits were consolidated in the Fifth Circuit in National Pork Council.

THE FIFTH CIRCUIT DECISION

In National Pork Council, the Court addressed industry plaintiffs’ challenges to the 2008 final rule requirement that CAFOs have a “duty to apply” for a permit and that EPA can levy penalties against CAFOs that fail to apply for a permit. Petitioners argued that the CWA only addresses actual, rather than potential discharges, and that EPA lacks authority under the CWA to require CAFOs to obtain permits based on a potential to discharge. The Court agreed with petitioners, holding that EPA exceeded its authority by purporting to regulate CAFOs without an actual discharge and to impose penalties for the separate violation of failing to apply for a permit. The Fifth Circuit determined that Waterkeeper’s holding is clear: without a discharge, EPA has no authority and there can be no duty to apply for a permit. Therefore, the Fifth Circuit declined to uphold EPA’s requirement that CAFOs that propose to discharge apply for an NPDES permit.

The Fifth Circuit reasoned that several circuit courts and even the Supreme Court have held that the scope of EPA’s authority under the CWA is strictly limited to the discharge of pollutants into navigable waters. In S.D. Warren Co. v. Maine Bd. of Envtl. Protection (2006), the Supreme Court recognized that in the CWA the “triggering statutory term is not the word ‘discharge’ alone, but ‘discharge of a pollutant,’ a phrase made narrower by its specific definition requiring an ‘addition’ of a pollutant to the water.” In Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc. v. EPA (1988), the D.C. Circuit stated that the CWA “does not empower the (EPA) to regulate point sources themselves; rather, EPA’s jurisdiction under the statute is limited to regulating the discharge of pollutants.” In National Pork Council, the Fifth Circuit concluded that EPA’s authority is limited to regulating CAFOs that discharge. The Fifth Circuit further held that EPA “cannot impose a duty to apply for a permit (NPDES) on a CAFO that ‘proposes to discharge’ or any CAFO before there is an actual discharge.” Nevertheless, EPA does retain authority to impose a duty to apply on CAFOs that are discharging. The Fifth Circuit decision also limits EPA’s ability to levy additional penalties for a CAFO that merely fails to apply for a permit.

IMPACT OF FIFTH CIRCUIT DECISION ON MISSISSIPPI

In Mississippi, although the Fifth Circuit’s decision is important regarding the scope of EPA’s authority to require permitting by CAFOs, the holding in National Pork Council requires almost no changes to state regulations and practices currently in place. Mississippi Department of Environmental (MDEQ) staff, working in the department of poultry farm permits, explains that the Fifth Circuit decision has almost no impact on state regulations because MDEQ does not ask a grower about potential to discharge. Additionally, MDEQ issues only permits for no discharge to facilities with more than 9000 chickens. Nevertheless, MDEQ staff advises applicants for permits to construct or modify poultry houses to expect a MDEQ Permit Board hearing prior to receiving an approved permit since the Permit Board must approve these specific types of permits.
We’ve had a colder-than-normal winter again this year all across the broiler belt, and spring was cooler than expected, but summer is now here in Mississippi. Warm weather means tunnel ventilation and evaporative cooling, and with rising electrical costs, proper maintenance and operation is essential to getting the most out of what you pay for in energy costs.

Ventilation system maintenance is important for several reasons, including proper performance, life of equipment, and probably most important – economics. A poorly-maintained ventilation system is going to cost more than a properly-maintained one, both in operation costs and bird performance.

Dirty fans perform worse than clean fans and move less air. As fan blades become weighted down, they spin slower and move less air, which translates into less heat removed from the birds. Dirty shutters cause an increased back pressure on the fan which can further reduce air movement and air velocity. Studies have shown that dirty blades and shutters can reduce fan output by 30%, which means less air velocity down the house.

Worn belts also reduce fan performance by slowing down propeller speed. The ratio of the diameters of the motor-drive pulley and the propeller pulley determines the speed of the propeller. A belt which runs ¼-inch low in the pulley reduces the effective diameter of the pulley by ½ inch. This reduction in effective pulley diameter can reduce propeller speed by 10%, which will reduce air speed by 10%. A pulley running ¼-inch low on ten fans means you’re paying the electrical bill for all ten fans but only getting the benefits of nine fans. Tunnel fans typically run about 3000 hours per year, and at 10 cents per kilowatt-hour for electricity will cost approximately $330 a year in electrical costs. For a four-house farm with 10 fans per house, a 10% reduction in fan performance means $1320 a year in wasted electricity.

Fan belts should be replaced yearly or when they ride low in the pulley. Increasing tension on a worn belt will not solve the problem. Link belts offer a lower maintenance alternative to traditional V-belts – after 100 hours of run time on a new link belt, simply removing a link provides the proper tension with minimal adjustment needed in the future.

Evaporative cooling provides a way to “beat the heat” in the warm summers experienced in Mississippi and the rest of the broiler belt. While evaporative cooling works best in dry climates, it is very effective in providing cooling when used in tunnel ventilation systems. A common question we receive is, “How much cooling can I expect out of my pads?” The answer depends on the outside weather conditions and the type of evaporative cooling system. We have provided a chart (page 15) that lists the temperature drop for a 6-inch pad system for different combinations of outside temperature and relative humidity. To use the chart, find the outside air temperature in the first column, follow that line across to the outside relative humidity, and find the expected temperature drop across the pad. It is important to have a way to measure temperature and relative humidity accurately. Many poultry supply companies offer inexpensive hand-held units that measure temperature, relative humidity, and air velocity. For example, if it is 90º F and 40% RH outside, the expected cooling drop will be about 14º F. The type of cooling system also dictates the temperature drop: a 6-inch pad system is more efficient (75%) than a 4-inch pad system (60%) or a fog-nozzle system (50%). We can adjust for the type of system very easily: simply multiply the temperature drop from the chart by 0.80 for a 4-inch pad system or 0.67 for a fog-nozzle system. If we had a 4-inch pad system for the previous example (90º F and 40% RH), then our cooling would be 14º F × 0.80 = 11º F.

Fans are the “engine” of the ventilation system, but proper operation and maintenance of the evaporative cooling system is important as well. Evaporative pads operate most effectively when air velocity through the pad is about 350 feet per minute. Blockages reduce the amount of air moving through the pad, making them less effective, so keeping pads clean is important. Supplying enough water to the pad is important as well. The re-circulation pump should provide
at least ¾ gallon per minute for each linear foot of pad. For example, if you have 60 feet of pad, the pump should be capable of delivering 45 gallons a minute.

Evaporative cooling systems also require regular maintenance to perform their best. Just like fans, cleanliness is key. Algae and mineral deposit build-up can block air passages. Blockages are costly, because they reduce the cooling efficiency of the pad and increase the pressure drop across the pad which increases the work load on the tunnel fan motors. In order to keep pads clean and operating efficiently, the following tips can be used as a guide for periodic maintenance:

1. Change sump water on a weekly basis. Since sump water is re-circulated in an evaporative cooling system, cleaner water means cleaner pads.
2. Clean troughs and sumps weekly. Dirt and other material, such as grass clippings or leaves, entering the sump is unavoidable and must be cleaned out regularly to prevent algae growth.
3. Check and clean filters weekly. Filters keep particulate matter from escaping the trough and plugging holes in the distribution pipe or passages in the pad.
4. Systems can be cleaned less frequently if your water source has low mineral content and the system remains clean.

While we typically worry about house tightness during cold weather, it can affect the performance of evaporative cooling systems as well. Leaks around evaporative pads mean hot outside air is coming in instead of passing through the pad and providing cooling. Sealing around evaporative cooling systems and doghouses will keep air moving through the pads.

During the summer months, preventive maintenance on ventilation systems will keep houses and birds cooler. Keeping fans and shutters clean, as well as replacing worn belts, will make sure that you will get the most bang for your buck when it comes to electrical usage. Clean evaporative cooling systems which are operating correctly will limit temperature extremes when hot weather arrives.

### EVAPORATIVE COOLING TEMPERATURE DROP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Air Temp</th>
<th>10%</th>
<th>20%</th>
<th>30%</th>
<th>40%</th>
<th>50%</th>
<th>60%</th>
<th>70%</th>
<th>80%</th>
<th>90%</th>
<th>100%</th>
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<tr>
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Historically, Mississippi has been very successful in controlling Infectious Laryngotracheitis (LT or ILT). Mississippi's last outbreak of this disease was in the winter of 2002-2003. Before then, we had not seen the disease for approximately 20 years, unlike our friends in neighboring states who seem to have the misfortune of dealing with the disease every year. Unfortunately, we are now dealing with this highly-contagious respiratory disease once again – mainly in the south central area of the state as shown by the white shapes on the map below from the State Board of Animal Health. There are a number of methods being implemented to try and bring this disease under control once again. Control measures include vaccination, windrowing the litter, heating the houses, applying litter amendments, and disinfecting water lines. The only method of prevention is biosecurity, which apparently did not work this year.

Newer molecular-based vectored vaccines were used exclusively in the beginning of this year's outbreak. The reactions to these vaccines are greatly reduced compared to the older live vaccines used in the past, and the virus in this vaccine does not spread the disease. However, protection proved to be very limited. As the outbreak progressed, live vaccines were administered only to flocks that had LT or nearby flocks and flocks which potentially may become infected with the disease due to intra-industry traffic or cross contamination along roadways. Presently, vaccination with live vaccine is not being done statewide, but many companies are using the newer vectored vaccines as a measure of control. Although they may be more effective, live vaccines cause severe reactions which affect livability, weight gain and feed conversions, and increase condemnation rates at the plant.

It has been shown that windrowing the litter for at least five days will destroy the LT virus. Litter contaminated with LT virus that is not windrowed will still have active virus present after five days. Before windrowing, washing or blowing down the dust within a house and along ventilation openings should be done to help increase the amount of virus on the pre-windrowed litter and remove as much virus as possible from the surfaces of the house. Heating litter to 100º F for 100 hours has always been a rule of thumb used in Mississippi. Heating litter kills the LT virus whereas virus can still be found in unheated litter samples. Windrowing helps a grower reach the 100º F litter temperature necessary to kill the virus.

Some work at Auburn University showed that using three common acidifying commercial litter treatments was successful in inactivating the LT virus in the litter. The treatments were applied at the rate of 50 lbs/1000 ft² and thoroughly mixed into the LT-contaminated litter. The treatments were left for five days with no LT virus recovered from the litter. This showed that changing the pH of the litter was able to kill the virus just as well as heat.

More work at Auburn has shown that not only bacteria but viruses such as LT virus can survive in the biofilm of the water lines. Using a method of water line disinfection and sanitation to remove the biofilm is effective in destroying the LT virus. However, in this study it was shown that bleach and citric acid alone had no affect on the LT virus. The biofilm must be removed, and these products are not effective in doing this when used alone.

As a veterinarian working with a large population of animals, I realize that the best way to control a disease is to prevent it. A large part of prevention is biosecurity on your farm. Unfortunately, even the best biosecurity plan is not bulletproof. However, a good biosecurity program will limit the exposure to the virus on a farm. Biosecurity should not be limited to what is mandated by integrators. Biosecurity is a state of mind that limits the number of factors that may introduce disease. Growers and company personnel must ask themselves before they visit a store, another farm, a restaurant, etc., “Could this stop be a potential risk factor for
spreading disease? “The best policy is to question every trip off the farm and any contact with non-farm folks at any location – not just on farms – by you, your family, and your employees. Growers and company personnel must work together to decrease the risk of spreading disease.

Fortunately, the majority of growers apply most of the control and prevention methods mentioned in the article on a routine basis. Many windrow their litter between flocks, apply litter amendments, disinfect their water lines, and think about biosecurity. Especially if you are in an area with a high potential of becoming exposed to the LT virus (see map), I would recommend that you use a combination of methods for control. Remember our rule of thumb: 100°C for 100 hours; even longer would be better. Heat alone may not penetrate the litter enough to kill all the virus, so windrowing along with heating the houses is the best method. Clean and disinfect the waterlines before the next batch of birds to remove all the biofilm in the lines. Implementing a good biosecurity program that reduces the number of visitors, rodents, and insects will help prevent LT. LT is a VERY contagious disease. It has even been shown to live in darkling beetles for weeks after birds are caught, so controlling them can be helpful.

Most importantly, call and report any abnormalities in your flock. Typically, water consumption will decrease significantly a few days before the birds show the first signs of LT. Mortality increases and respiratory signs should be reported immediately even if it seems insignificant to you. What may only show as wet eyes in one house of a flock may kill a large number in the next infected house on yours or your neighbor’s farm. It is better to be safe than sorry.
With the recent tornadoes and flooding in the state and surrounding areas, poultry producers need to be ready in the event of the next natural disaster. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers a Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), which was created in the last Farm Bill, to provide benefits to livestock producers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by adverse weather conditions that occurred on or after January 1, 2008 and before October 1, 2011. The weather conditions include losses due to hurricanes, floods, blizzards, disease caused by adverse weather, wildfires, extreme heat, and extreme cold. The livestock deaths must have occurred in the calendar year for which benefits are requested.

In the event of a natural disaster, producers need to contact their local FSA office within 30 days of losing the chickens to qualify for the livestock indemnity program. You may want to call them first to see what paperwork and verification is needed, such as a copy of your contract, mortality chart, placement sheet, or a letter from your integrator stating the number of chickens you lost due to the natural disaster.

If you have any questions about this program please contact me at chandler@mspoultry.org or (601) 932-7560, or contact your local FSA office.
The Mississippi State University Department of Poultry Science is filling four positions: department head, assistant research/extension professor, assistant/associate professor, and assistant research professor.

While the search for the department head is being conducted, Dr. E. David Peebles was promoted to interim department head. Dr. Peebles takes over the position from Dr. Benjy Mikel, who was named associate vice president for international programs and executive director of the university’s International Institute. Dr. Peebles earned his Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina. His main areas of research are broiler breeder management, reproductive/environmental physiology, commercial layer pathology, and nutrition and post-hatch broiler performance. Dr. Peebles currently teaches Genetics I, along with his other responsibilities. He has assumed the interim head position and will serve until a permanent department head is found.

Dr. Wei Zhei, a post-doctoral research assistant, was hired as the assistant research/extension professor of poultry nutrition and management. Dr. Zhei’s prior research has included poultry nutrition, grow-out performance of broilers, and muscular development. This position is a 75% research and a 25% extension appointment with an emphasis on nutrition of broilers and commercial layers.

The other two vacant positions are for the associate professor of poultry processing, products and food safety and the assistant research professor of poultry environmental control and litter management. The professor of poultry processing, products and food safety position is a 60% research and 40% teaching appointment, with an emphasis on poultry processing, products, and food safety. The professor of poultry environmental control and litter management position will be a 100% research appointment split between the Department of Poultry Science and the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering. The expectations of this position will be to provide impact-driven research to the broiler and layer industries in the state of Mississippi. Research will include poultry facility environment, analysis, and automation. This will allow for extensive research into improving efficiency, life-cycle analysis, environmental control, alternative energy systems, and litter management.

These positions are crucial to the success of the university’s poultry research. The department is conducting a national search for well-qualified applicants and hopes to have the Department of Poultry Science fully staffed by the fall semester of 2011.
UPCOMING EVENTS

MPA ANNUAL CONVENTION
September 15-18, 2011
Hilton Sandestin Beach Resort & Spa – Destin, FL
See pages 6-7 for details.

*** RESCHEDULED ***
MPA POULTRY MANAGEMENT SCHOOL
The Poultry Management School has been rescheduled, but the program is the same. We are looking forward to our annual event on October 20-21, 2011. The MSU College of Veterinary Medicine in Starkville, MS will be the location of this year’s event. Details to follow in the next Emerging Trends newsletter.

UPCOMING ELECTIONS
Party Primary Elections: August 2, 2011
Run-offs: August 23, 2011
General Election: November 8, 2011

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