THE COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE COMMENDS POULTRY’S GROWTH; IMPACT

By Cindy Hyde-Smith, Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture & Commerce

I am honored to serve as your Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce. I have a passion for agriculture and for those who work tirelessly to feed and clothe the world. Being a cattle farmer and part owner and operator of Lincoln County Livestock, I have a true understanding of the critical role that farmers play in our society. I worked to promote and protect Mississippi agriculture while serving in the State Senate for 12 years and chairing the Senate Agriculture Committee for eight years. As Commissioner, I will continue these efforts.

It recently made headlines when the world’s population recently reached 7 billion. While some celebrated reaching this milestone, some were left scratching their heads wondering how we are going to feed this growing number of people in the future. The rapidly increasing population accompanied by less acreage available for production along with an aging farmer population compound the challenges that our farmers face day in and day out. Being a farmer and small business owner myself, I understand firsthand the challenges that growers face and how important agriculture is to our state and nation, as well as, globally. I believe that our farmers in Mississippi, no matter how large or small, are poised to meet these challenges. With our fertile soil, temperate climate, and gifted farmers, we have the resources, fortitude, and versatility to make a great impact on the world.

With poultry being Mississippi’s largest agricultural commodity, this $2.4 billion industry plays an important role in Mississippi agriculture industry as well as the state’s overall economy. The value of egg production alone was $223 million in 2011, up $43 million from 2010. Being concentrated mainly in the south-central portion of the state, the poultry industry greatly impacts these local communities and acts as a large employer and tax generator making it even more vital that the industry continues to thrive and grow. Along these lines, one of my goals as Mississippi’s Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce is to assist farmers increase their visibility, both domestically and globally, and seek out new markets through targeted marketing campaigns and educational initiatives in order to broaden their customer base, increase revenue, and create jobs. My additional priorities while serving in office include strengthening and enhancing our consumer protection services to ensure fairness and equity in the marketplace while maintaining high standards for Mississippi’s agricultural products and services and expanding the opportunities in agritourism and alternative energy.

Again, I am honored to serve as your Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce. I look forward to working with the Mississippi Poultry Association in the future, and I would like to congratulate you on celebrating 75 years of success in assisting and advocating for Mississippi’s number one agricultural commodity.
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The long-term global outlook for Mississippi’s poultry industry is extremely positive if a few short term problems don’t trip us up on the path to prosperity.

That positive outlook was something I took away from the Executive Conference on the Future of the Poultry Industry at the International Poultry Exposition in Atlanta in January. Five speakers spent a morning explaining how we got here and where the industry is headed.

Global population growth over the next 50 years will mean more demand for chicken and technological innovations are in the pipeline to help Mississippi farmers and companies feed that demand. What could prevent that is a small group of activists working to take away choices for consumers and producers.

“There is no bigger global issue than safe, affordable food,” said Jeff Simmons, president of Elanco. He said in 50 years, the world will need 100 percent more food than today. Hunger is the world’s number one health issue, he added.

Simmons quoted a 2011 letter from Bill Gates, saying, “When farmers increase their productivity, nutrition is improved and hunger and poverty are reduced.” According to Simmons, 70 percent of the answer to meeting the need is in technology. “The technological pipeline is full” and will help overcome animal diseases and improve animal welfare if fringe groups don’t get their way. He cited USDA statistics that U.S. agricultural production more than doubled from 1948 to 2008 with no increase in inputs.

Based on 26 studies and surveys in 28 countries, Simmons said 95 percent of consumers are “food buyers” concerned with taste, cost, and nutrition, and 4 percent are “lifestyle” buyers more concerned with where and how the food is raised. The other 1 percent are fringe activists who want to ban products and practices and take choices away.

Those activists are wealthy and base their appeals on emotions, said Dr. Yvonne Vizzier Thaxton, former head of the Mississippi State University Poultry Science Department, who is now teaching at the University of Arkansas. She said agriculture groups need to see the 95 percent and the 4 percent Simmons mentioned as different segments of the market and focus on solutions to answer the 1 percent.

The answers should be science-based, bring more transparency to agricultural methods, and involve cooperation across a wide range of agricultural groups to forthrightly address the misconceptions about farming practices and technology promoted by the 1 percent.

While the global population growth means “an incredibly bright future” for the poultry industry in the U.S., it is also causing problems, said Adrian Westrate with Rabobank based in Holland. From 2010 to 2030, global poultry production is expected to increase 60 percent. However, the growth is driving up the price of grains which makes chicken more expensive. This is one of the factors in the bankruptcy of four U.S. poultry companies in 2011.

The poultry industry has had a strong tradition of adopting innovation, said Dr. Doug Britton, Agricultural Technology Research Program Manager, Georgia Tech University. He said in the next 20 years, there will be more robots in poultry plants, and more of the jobs will require computer skills rather than knife skills. Work on developing rapid pathogen detection will be a boost to the industry, as well, when it is implemented.

Dr. Donald Conner, Auburn University Poultry Science Department Chair, said that each new innovation has taken about 3-5 years to create a jump in productivity, and each one lasts about 10-20 years. Many of those innovations have come through research at universities with poultry science departments. In the 1940s, there were 45 departments. Today, there are 6, including MSU. Between 1927 and 2009, funding for research grew at 3 percent per year, but now federal research dollars are declining and universities are turning to private sources to keep the innovation pipeline filled. The six remaining departments are more directly involved in supporting the industry, and the industry will have to make up the lost federal research dollars, he added.

So, the bottom line: in the long term, the poultry industry will provide a significant income to Mississippians if all involved can continue to adopt rapid innovation and be able explain to consumers why it is vital to do so.
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Despite a tough economy, poultry remained the top commodity in Mississippi with a preliminary estimated value of $2.4 billion for 2011 keeping it’s number one spot among state commodities.

While the total estimated value of poultry was up by only a fraction of a percentage point, the estimated value of eggs increased by 24 percent. Both broiler and chicken values decreased slightly in 2011.

“The main driver of eggs was price,” said John Michael Riley, Mississippi State University Extension Service agricultural economist. “There wasn’t a whole lot of variation in production or the final value of broilers.” Broilers’ estimated value dropped 2 percent in 2011, to $2.2 billion. High input costs and some cutbacks caused the slight decrease.

“The biggest challenge this year was the cost of feed,” Riley said. “We saw a lot of this nationwide, with poultry firms going out of business and filing for bankruptcy. Their costs just got ahead of their revenues.” Broiler prices were mostly level and are expected to be about the same in 2012.

Danny Thornton, MSU Extension poultry specialist, said energy costs also played a role in the overall slight decrease in production. “Fuel prices have gone up for electricity, diesel, and propane. Booked prices for propane are about 50 cents per gallon higher than 2010,” Thornton said. “Both feed and energy costs have caused producers to cut back and drop the number of birds they have.” Even with high feed and energy costs, Mississippi producers fared pretty well.

Nationally, Mississippi ranks fifth in actual value of production of broilers, behind Georgia, Arkansas, Alabama, and North Carolina. Mississippi producers had a total of 800 million chicks placed in 2011. Cal-Maine, a Mississippi-based egg producer, had 1.5 million to 2 million birds producing in 2011.

“It’s been a rough year for poultry producers, but it’s looking better,” Thornton said. “Corn prices are easing down and retail chicken prices are going up. Chicken is still an economical, healthy protein, and that will continue to be true. Before long, I think we’ll see some new markets open up.” Overall poultry production is predicted to be about the same for 2012.

“There has been a pull-back in supply this year because of the high input costs associated with production,” Riley said. “For 2012, the question is what is demand going to be? We are cautiously optimistic because the economy is still pretty tough.”

Forestry was the second highest commodity in the state, with a total estimated value of $1 million. The current estimated 2011 year-end harvest value of all agricultural commodities is $6.7 million.
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BACKGROUND
Since February 2009, the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) has required poultry growers to provide contiguous landowners with notification prior to construction or expansion of poultry houses under a Dry Litter Poultry Animal Feeding Operations (AFO) Multimedia General Permit (“permits”). Under the MDEQ regulations, only a “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 seventeen days to submit comments to MDEQ regarding the proposed permit.

MDEQ staff reported that an average of two to three permits are presented to the MDEQ Permit Board (“Permit Board”) for approval each month. Typically, MDEQ staff informs the Permit Board that the agency has received numerous letters of concern from contiguous landowners regarding issuance of the applied for permit. Contiguous landowners often express concern regarding health issues, zoning issues and environmental issues.

Following suggestions by the Mississippi Poultry Association (MPA) and poultry growers around the state that the form provided by MDEQ to contiguous landowners was confusing and ambiguous, MDEQ staff has revised the “Contiguous Landowner Notification Form.” To date, the revised form has resulted in fewer objections by contiguous landowners to MDEQ regarding new or expanded facilities.

THE ORIGINAL FORM
The original Contiguous Landowner Notification Form stated the following:

(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.

Following receipt of the above letter, most contiguous landowners contacted MDEQ to object to the issuance of a permit to construct or expand poultry houses.

THE NEW FORM
The new form provides notification to the contiguous landowner in an informative and detailed manner that is more easily understood by the reader. For example, the form explains that a Dry Litter Poultry Animal Feeding Operation permit is issued “to construct and operate poultry/chicken houses.” Other features of the new form that provide more detailed information to the reader include the following:

1. The number of existing houses and the number of proposed houses to build;
2. Language regarding “animal waste” has been revised to state that construction may involve “the discharge of storm water that comes into contact with exposed soils;”
3. The Natural Resource Conservation Service’s (NRCS) plan to prevent or mitigate sediment from leaving the proposed project area and the Comprehensive Nutrient Management plan (CNMP) are explained;
4. Management of dry animal waste is specified; and
5. Comments related specifically to environmental issues are invited while comments related to zoning, economic or social impacts are directed to local zoning and planning authorities.

By providing more detailed information to the contiguous landowner, the new form notifies the reader about the proposed permit while educating the reader about operation of these type of facilities.

Under the new form, an applicant must still send notification by a “certified-return receipt requested mail” to all contiguous landowners and must still retain the “returned receipts” for a period of five years. Once notified, the contiguous landowner continues to have seventeen days to submit comments to MDEQ regarding the proposed permit.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the new Contiguous Landowner Notification form, feel free to contact MPA, John Milner or Susan Floyd King.
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The Chairmen of the Senate and House Agriculture Committees have some similarities in their different backgrounds, and both are strong advocates of building Mississippi’s agricultural base.

Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Billy Hudson was born in Forrest County and raised on a farm, but later got into the retail business in a big way. He was the owner and CEO of the Hudson’s chain of stores in Southeast Mississippi, which he later sold. Prior to being elected to the Legislature in 2007, Sen. Hudson was a Forrest County Supervisor. He lists his occupation today as “rancher.”

Sen. Hudson, who owns timberland and cattle, told Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves that the one committee he wanted to chair would be Agriculture, and that was the assignment he was given. Sen. Hudson also asked that he have the old vault on the second floor of the Capitol as his office. If you go to visit him, you will see pictures of his grandkids sitting on a massive green safe beside the table that serves as his desk.

Sen. Hudson, a University of Southern Mississippi graduate, is married to the former Barbara Lee. In addition to chairing the Agriculture Committee, he is vice chairman of County Affairs, and serves on the following committees: Environmental Protection, Conservation and Water Resources, Finance, Highways and Transportation, Labor, Rules, and Universities and Colleges. Sen. Hudson is a Republican.

Chairman Hudson said he is very optimistic about the future of Mississippi agriculture and the poultry industry in particular.

Rep. Preston Sullivan is a cattle farmer in Chickasaw County. His brother Mike was a poultry grower for Marshall Durbin until a few years ago when Mike was named State Executive Director for USDA Farm Service Agency in Mississippi. Rep. Sullivan is very knowledgeable about the poultry industry.

Rep. Sullivan, a Democrat, lists his occupation as “cattlemans.” He also was a county supervisor before being elected to the Legislature in 2003. A Mississippi State University graduate, he is married to the former Linda Buchanan. He serves on the Appropriations, Conservation and Water Resources, County Affairs, Energy, Public Property and the Joint Legislative Budget committees. During the last four years, Rep. Sullivan was the deskmate of Rep. Philip Gunn, who was elected Speaker of the House in January.

Chairman Sullivan said he is ready to be an advocate for the needs of agriculture even when that is unpopular with his fellow representatives.
Poultry production has come a long way over the last century. Today’s modern broiler, turkey, and commercial layer industries exist because of the advancements and gains realized largely due to researching, controlling and eradicating certain diseases which were devastating to poultry production at one time. This article will highlight the history of controlling certain diseases which allowed the integration of the poultry industry as we know it today.

At the turn of the last century, small flocks made up of various types of fowl such as chickens, turkeys, geese, and/or guinea fowl were common on most farms. These generally ran free about the farm yard and often had high mortalities due to predators, certain unknown “conditions” that were likely classical diseases that we know about today, and the occasional Sunday dinner with the minister in the area. Poultry diseases were poorly classified and little understood during this era. Poultry exhibits were common, and many flock owners were very sentimental and passionate about their exhibition birds. Bird husbandry and home remedies were hot topics of discussion at these events.

Interestingly, symptoms and signs of some of these conditions in the early 1900s were described as rheumatism, vertigo, curly toes, and roup. “Colds” were common, “gout” was a common term of that time, and gapeworms were a constant problem. Treatments were various and numerous and were often exchanged by word of mouth. Some of the more interesting recommended treatments at the time were as follows: “The use of kerosene is a handy and sure cure for roup. By holding the bird so it can’t swallow and filling the throat with kerosene, later injecting kerosene into the nostrils, the effect is magical.” For gape worms, “it is advisable to place the birds in a closed box and blow tobacco smoke into it from a pipe.” Obviously, there was very little science in the use of many of these remedies, and as a result, treatments were not usually successful.

Around the 1920s, incubators were developed which allowed for larger numbers of birds to be hatched. A change in the U.S. postal system policy allowed shipment of baby chicks. This began an increase in the number of small feed stores which would sell small numbers of chicks to customers and often buy them back for processing. This was true of the fledgling poultry industry in Mississippi as most of the large companies that we know today in our state started out this way. As flocks slowly began to get larger, this promoted conditions which allowed for the build-up and recognition of certain poultry pathogens which caused very high mortalities.

Pullorum, caused by Salmonella pullorum, is an example of one of these early diseases which was a real menace for the young poultry industry. The disease was first called “fetal septicemia of young chicks” or “bacillary white diarrhea,” and reports indicated that the disease was widespread in the U.S. Work to understand the disease actually began in the early 1900s when it was reported that the disease was egg transmitted. This was the first documented report of egg transmission of any infectious disease in poultry, so this was a historical discovery. This led to development of certain techniques to identify infected chickens which in turn led to eradication efforts since individual birds could be tested and culled if found to be infected. Subsequent meetings were held by laboratory workers to develop and modify eradication efforts which served as the first such meetings of avian pathologists. By 1935, this led to the formation of what we know today as the National Poultry Improvement Plan. The eradication of Pullorum was ultimately successful. Before eradication, reports of mortality in chicks were found to be up to 85% or even higher, and by the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century, it was still considered to be the most important disease of poultry. Based on these scenarios, it should be readily apparent that its control and eradication was essential for the young broiler industry to move forward. It should also be mentioned that a related pathogen, Salmonella gallinarum (Fowl Typhoid), was also studied and eradicated along with Pullorum during this era.

Other vital diseases which had to be controlled were the avian tumor viruses. In fact, many of the “firsts” in tumor virology that laid the groundwork for studies in other animals and even humans were initially researched in poultry. Initial observations concerning cancers using poultry began as early as the late 19th century, but the research really intensified in the 1930s and 1940s when advances in poultry husbandry allowed for poultry expansion. The resultant increase in population density increased losses from several diseases, some of which were commonly described as “big liver disease” and “range paralysis.” These were later found to be tumors associated with a group of viruses termed avian leukosis complex, one of which we commonly call Marek’s disease today.

Although Marek’s was associated with a polyneuropathy, causing lameness, paralysis, and sometimes blindness, an acute form of the disease began to occur in the late 1940s and early 1950s that caused high mortality with tumors in the viscera as the predominant lesion. This continued into the early 1960s to the point that the major cause of economic loss to the chicken industry, especially on the eastern seaboard, was Marek’s. This led to intensified research on the disease and establishment of dedicated, national Regional Poultry Research Laboratories which culminated in the discovery of a vaccine virus call HVT. The vaccine was hugely successful in preventing the disease and is still currently being used universally where poultry is produced commercially. It is truly one of the most remarkable success stories in avian disease research.

Another important disease discovered in the 1950s was a condition that was initially termed “avian nephrosis” or “Gumboro” from a farm in Gumboro, Delaware. This gave rise to the disease name of “Gumboro.” The syndrome was characterized by mortality ranging from 1 to 10 percent and high morbidity. It later spread to other regions of the U.S. with Mississippi having a significant outbreak in the early 1960s. The disease was later found to be caused by a virus which...
destroyed the bursa of the chicken. This severely weakened the immune system of the chicken and made them more susceptible to certain other diseases that normally would not cause a problem. Dr. Bruce Glick of Mississippi State University documented the importance of the bursa in the chicken as a vital immune organ, thus the disease has been termed Infectious Bursal Disease (IBD).

Conventional methods of the time failed to control the disease, and vigorous efforts were initiated to develop a vaccine. Some of the first “vaccines” used were bursal homogenates obtained from chickens infected in the field, which proved helpful in minimizing effects of the disease. Live commercial vaccines, which became available in the late 1960s and early 1970s, effectively controlled the disease. IBD vaccination continues to be the primary method of control for Gumboro to this day.

There are a host of other diseases that have significantly impacted the poultry industry over the decades such as mycoplasmosis, coccidiosis, and numerous other pathogens, but space does not allow for a discussion of each of these. Each of these syndromes had to be researched and controlled in order to allow for integration and continued growth of the poultry industry. Other factors such as advances in management techniques and farm equipment have also certainly played a key role in helping to reduce the incidence of disease in today’s commercial poultry operations. The future continues to be very promising in regard to disease control and prevention due to advances in diagnostic capabilities and new developments in vaccine efficacy and delivery. Hopefully, we can continue to enjoy the good overall health that we have been experiencing over the past decade in Mississippi’s poultry industry.
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Hello! I’d like to introduce myself to you as the new department head of the Poultry Science Department at Mississippi State University. My path to Mississippi started, interestingly, in Mississippi, where I spent lots of time as a child at my grandparents’ home in Clinton. I have roots in Jones, Scott, Oktibbeha, and Lamar Counties; and it’s terrific to be here. Along the way, I grew up mostly in Maryland, spent time at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and more recently at Clemson University. My research expertise is environmental physiology and the close working relationship between MSU’s Poultry Science Department and the ARS USDA Poultry Research Unit on campus is very exciting to me personally and professionally.

As a department, we’re committed to the State of Mississippi in several ways. Our students and our industry are our first priority. We are dedicated to giving the students the very best training possible to prepare them for careers in various aspects of the poultry enterprise. Some will go to industry; others to graduate school in premier poultry programs. To better help us achieve these goals, we’re getting ready to advertise an applied nutrition/Extension position and hope to have another environmental research/Extension faculty position soon. We are working on a new Poultry Chain 4-H Project to engage young Mississippians in the science of our state’s largest agricultural segment.

In looking forward as a department and an industry, we have an over-arching issue facing us – to feed up to 9 billion people by 2050 in an environmentally, ethically, and economically sustainable way that also ensures affordable, nutritious, and healthy food. That’s a tall order, and understanding what those words really mean makes it even tougher. We know that the environment is under pressure from human overuse, that some consumers want different housing systems for animals in production, and that many people in the world are already living below the poverty level without access to adequate nutrition. I believe we have the knowledge and the technological power to address these issues if we keep our heads and are willing to communicate and work together.

I believe that the Poultry Science Department at MSU and the Mississippi Poultry industries are uniquely positioned to contribute significantly to these challenges. I look forward to getting to know you and working with you! If you’re even in Starkville, stop by and say hello.
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Dr. Kelli Jones of Mississippi State University’s College of Veterinary Medicine has won the World Veterinary Poultry Association (WVPA) Young Veterinarian of the Year award. Jones, who is a Diplomate of the American College of Poultry Veterinarians and an assistant clinical professor in CVM’s Department of Pathobiology and Population Medicine, is an expert in avian medicine and poultry disease diagnostics. She serves Mississippi’s $2.43 billion poultry industry through her work at CVM’s Poultry Research and Diagnostic Laboratory (PRDL) in Pearl.

“The award given to Dr. Jones is recognition of the fact that we have world-class poultry veterinarians here in Mississippi,” said Dr. Bill Epperson, professor and head of CVM’s Department of Pathobiology and Population Medicine.

The WVPA Young Veterinarian of the Year award was created by WVPA and Pfizer Animal Health Global Poultry to recognize young veterinarians’ important contributions to the success of the industry. The honor was open to poultry veterinarians under the age of 35, and a panel of global poultry experts selected Jones as the winner.

“Maintaining excellent bird health and welfare is at the very heart of efficient poultry production, and so veterinarians have a key role to play in successful poultry businesses,” said Dr. Trevor Bagust, president of the WVPA.

Dr. Danny Magee, director of the Poultry Research and Diagnostic Laboratory, nominated Jones for the award, which includes a $5,000 travel award to be used for expenses associated with attending scientific poultry meetings.

“One of Dr. Jones’ main roles at the PRDL is to provide veterinary services to Mississippi’s commercial poultry industry. She accomplishes this through field service visits, laboratory investigations and research projects,” Magee said. “Her involvement with the industry has also given her the opportunity to share poultry medicine with veterinary, undergraduate, and graduate students.

“Dr. Jones serves as a consultant to the domestic and international poultry industries. She also contributes to her profession by speaking at meetings and serving on professional committees for both the American College of Poultry Veterinarians and the American Association of Avian Pathologists,” Magee said.
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Fifty-one years after graduating from Mississippi State University, Coyt “Bud” West returned to his alma mater to be honored by the industry he served.

On Nov. 17, West’s colleagues, friends, family, and MSU faculty and administration gathered at the university’s poultry science building to honor West as he was inducted into the Mississippi Poultry Association’s Hall of Fame for his many years of service to the poultry industry.

West majored in agricultural education and took on a few different jobs after graduation before deciding to manage his family soybean farm in Jones County.

“I was happy to be farming on my family’s land,” West said. “Then Hurricane Camille hit and put us out of business.”

Determined to make a career for himself, West joined Sanderson Farms in 1969 as a pullet handling supervisor. It wasn’t long before West was promoted to various jobs such as company farms supervisor and then broiler manager in Hazlehurst. After several years of management of Hazlehurst, West transferred back to Laurel where he was promoted to Laurel production division manager.

Bob Billingsley, Sanderson Farms director of development and engineering, has worked with West since 1984 and said no one was surprised when CEO Joe Sanderson Jr. asked West to spearhead a new complex in McComb.

“At the time, Joe had 1,500 employees to choose from, and he knew quickly that Bud was his man,” said Billingsley, who spoke at the induction ceremony. “West was entrusted with going into the community, building relationships and getting the new Sanderson Farms complex built. This was the first time someone had done this, and he did not let the company or the community down.”

After his success in McComb, Sanderson asked West to manage the building of a new complex in Bryan-College Station, Texas.

“This was quite the venture for the company and there was no doubt that West could handle it,” Billingsley said. “He and his wife, Gwen, made an outstanding team. During his time in the communities, Gwen was business manager and recruited contract producers in the office.”

West eventually returned to the business headquarters in Laurel as director of production. In 2004, West was asked to take on the development of a third new production complex in south Georgia. He retired at the end of 2004 and now enjoys spending time with his wife, daughters and grandchildren.

“Our company is so fortunate to have had West for so many years. He would do anything for us,” Billingsley said. “He helped make Sanderson Farms a part of communities by being consistent, fair and approachable. He did everything in the right way and in the right spirit.”

Mississippi Poultry Association president Mark Leggett said West was an obvious choice for the Poultry Hall of Fame.

“Bud was a recruiter, trainer and mentor. He got people involved in an industry that provides so much for our state,” Leggett said. “He truly deserves this recognition.”

Since 1973, a committee put together by MPA selects an individual to be honored for his or her work in one of Mississippi’s most profitable industries. The honorees’ portraits are displayed in MSU’s poultry science building.

“Mississippi State is the most fitting place to bestow this honor as it is the institution that prepares so many for this dynamic industry,” Leggett said. “We are proud to partner with the university.”

West, who was joined at the induction ceremony by his wife, Gwen, and his children, grandchildren and sisters, took time to reflect on his career.

“One has to enjoy what they do to be happy,” he said. “I have loved the poultry industry and the people I worked with and for.”

Of the recognition, West said he was honored to become a member of such an elite group. Being at MSU, surrounded by those he respects and cares for was what made the event special for West.

“You are only as good as the people around you,” he said. “This is really as good as it gets.”
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The U.S. Poultry & Egg Association presented the organization’s annual Lamplighter Award to Dolph Baker during the 2012 International Poultry Expo.

The award pays tribute to individuals for “sustained and exemplary service” to the poultry and egg industry.

Baker is the president and chief executive officer of Cal-Maine Foods. He has been employed with Cal-Maine since 1986 and has served as a director since 1991. Baker graduated from Mississippi State University with a degree in business administration. He has served on numerous boards, including past chairman of the Mississippi Poultry Association, past chairman of the American Egg Board, past chairman of the United Egg Producers and was a former USPOULTRY board member.

“We value the commitment, hard work and support Dolph has provided to our industry,” said 2011 USPOULTRY Chairman Gary Cooper, Cooper Farms. “Dolph is dedicated to advancing the industry, and we appreciate his service and devotion.”

(L-R) Dolph Baker of Cal-Maine Foods receives the USPOULTRY Lamplighter Award from CEO John Starkey
The USDA has released the 2012 notice of funding availability for the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). REAP incentivizes a broad range of renewable energy and energy efficiency grants and loans for agricultural producers and rural small businesses. The following are deadlines applicants will need to know. Those interested in applying should contact:

G. Gary Jones, USDA Rural Development
100 W. Capital Street, Suite 831 • Jackson, MS 39269
(601) 965-5457 • george.jones@ms.usda.gov

**DEADLINES FOR REAP APPLICATIONS FOR 2012 REAP**

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<th>PROGRAM ELEMENT</th>
<th>DEADLINE</th>
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<td>Renewable energy system feasibility study applications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Renewable energy and energy efficiency improvements guaranteed loan only applications</td>
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**LOAN GUARANTEE PREFERENCE CONTINUES**

The funding notice makes available the $61 million in total 2012 funding by providing $12.5 million in grants and $48.5 million in total loan guarantees. The USDA provides preferential treatment for loan guarantees including expedited processing of loan guarantees and longer times to submit guaranteed loan applications. However, there is no preference for combination loan and grant applications, unlike previous years. Unused loan guarantee funding will be used for grant and combination applications.

**REDUCED SUPPORT FROM USDA FOR FEASIBILITY STUDIES**

Feasibility study support provides “seed funding” to help local owners develop community-owned energy projects and make wise investment decisions. This year the USDA capped the amount for any one feasibility study to $50,000 (or 25% of projects costs), with a nationwide cap of $500,000, or 10 feasibility studies. This action is unfortunate and will lead to fewer projects entering the development pipeline. USDA should lift this cap.

**ENERGY AUDITS AND RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE**

These applications are on a tight turnaround and will be capped overall at $880,000. This funding helps rural electric cooperatives, state and local governments and others administer programs to provide energy audits and renewable energy development assistance in their region.

The 2012 REAP Notice of Funding availability can be downloaded from http://tinyurl.com/reapnotice.
Jones County Junior College is one of only 20 universities/colleges in the nation, and the only junior/community college, to receive a U.S. Poultry Association grant. The $7,000 check was presented to JCJC Agriculture Science instructor, Tim Ishee at the college’s Economic Symposium on Mississippi’s Agri-Business. To keep the industry growing and viable, the U.S. Poultry Foundation approved student recruiting grants totaling approximately $180,000 this year to help colleges recruit students into the poultry industry.

“It is critical that we persist in attracting sharp young people to study for careers in the poultry industry,” said U.S. Poultry & Egg Association chairman Gary Cooper, Cooper Farms, Oakwood, Ohio. “We need bright young managers to join our companies today, as they will ultimately be the leaders of tomorrow. The U.S. Poultry Foundation’s recruiting grants play an important role encouraging students to enroll in poultry studies.”

U.S. Poultry & Egg Association established the U.S. Poultry Foundation in 1994 to provide student recruiting funds to universities with poultry science departments. In 2004, the Poultry Science Education Funding Program was added to the foundation’s umbrella so other colleges and universities that offer identifiable poultry science studies are eligible to apply for recruiting grants. Application must be made for these grants, which provide up to $7,000 each. The Mississippi Poultry Association is an affiliate of the U.S. Poultry & Egg Association.

2012 Magnolia Beef and Poultry Expo

THURSDAY, APRIL 12, 2012
9 A.M. – 4 P.M.
SMITH COUNTY AGRICULTURAL COMPLEX
RALEIGH, MISSISSIPPI

The Magnolia Beef and Poultry Expo offers educational seminars and a trade show featuring agricultural equipment, cattle pharmaceuticals and other valuable information for beef and poultry production.

The educational sessions include the projection of beef prices and its economic outlook, contagious poultry diseases and the State's response, a beef cooking demonstration and respiratory problems with cattle vaccines.

This event is made possible by the Mississippi State University Extension Service and Community Bank. The Mississippi Poultry Association is a proud supporter of the Magnolia Beef and Poultry Expo.
Laurel High School won the culinary completion at the 3rd annual MS ProStart Invitational. The event was put on by the Mississippi Restaurant Association and Mississippi Poultry Association to get students from all over the state interested in the food service and poultry industries. The competition was held at the Old Capitol Inn in Jackson, MS.

The event consisted of two parts: the culinary competition, for which Sanderson Farms, Inc. provided the chicken, and the management competition. The culinary competition allowed student teams to demonstrate their creative abilities through the preparation of a three-course meal, with chicken as the main course, in only 60 minutes. The management competition allowed students to demonstrate their knowledge of the business aspect of the restaurant and food service industry. MPA Chairman Ray Ables, live complex manager for Tyson Foods in Forest, was a judge for the management competition.

Clarksdale’s Carl Keen Vocational Center won this year’s management division of the competition. Steve Bonasia, corporate chef for Sanderson Farms, Inc., was presented with the ProStart Partner of the Year Award. Chef Bonasia devoted his time and talent throughout the past year to benefit the students and the entire ProStart Program. He played a critical role in this year’s competition by working to arrange the product donation, the skills demonstration, educator development and acting as a mentor to Laurel High School, this year’s Culinary Champion.

Laurel High School and Carl Veen Vocational Center are two of the schools that will be sent to Baltimore, Maryland, to compete against 48 other teams on the national level for over $1.2 million in scholarships. Winning teams at the MS ProStart were awarded over $500,000 in scholarships to post-secondary colleges, universities and culinary schools.
The MPA Grower Membership Drive for 2012 is underway! Join us by going to our website, www.mspoultry.org, where you can print the application or 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 producers, and we continue to seek your guidance and opinions as we seek out more ways to benefit you.

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 Ben Chandler at 601-932-7560 or chandler@mspoultry.org.

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

**NAME**

________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

**COMPANY I GROW FOR**

________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

**ADDRESS**

________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

**CITY** ____________________________________________________________ **STATE** ________________________ **ZIP** ________________________

**CELL PHONE**

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___________ ENCLOSED ARE MY ANNUAL DUES AS A GROWER OF $30.00

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110 Airport Road South, Suite C • Pearl, Mississippi 39208 • 601-932-7560 • www.mspoultry.org
Celebrating our 75th Anniversary!

UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL 12
Magnolia Beef and Poultry Expo in Raleigh, MS

JUNE 5
Grower Advisory Committee meeting

SEPTEMBER 13-15
MPA 75th Annual Convention in Sandestin, FL (below)

OCTOBER 23-24
MPA Poultry Management School in Starkville, MS

GROWER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Richard Carter
Marshall Durbin

Michael Magee
Tyson Foods

Robert Smith
Wayne Farms

James Cochran
Marshall Durbin

Ted Mangum
Wayne Farms

Danny Thornton
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Bo Duvall
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Peter McKinley
Sanderson Farms

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Peco Farms

Ronnie Ingram
Tyson Foods

Matt Owen
Wayne Farms

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

MISSISSIPPI POULTRY ASSOCIATION

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leggett@mspoultry.org

Sam LeNarz, Chairman

Ray Ables, Vice Chairman

Todd Grisham, Treasurer

Ronnie Ingram, Grower Advisory Committee Chairman

Ben Chandler, Grower Relations Coordinator

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