LED BULBS: MUCH TO OFFER THE POULTRY INDUSTRY

by Dr. Tom Tabler, Dr. Morgan Farnell and Mrs. Jessica Wells
Mississippi State University Extension Service

The light emitting diode (LED) bulb is an energy saving alternative to other light sources commonly used in poultry production. The development and refinement of LED technology to meet the lighting needs of the poultry industry over the past 5 years has been a remarkable feat. As a general rule, the poultry industry is pretty conservative, and it has taken a while for the industry to become comfortable with LED technology. However, there is enough data available now that the industry is embracing LED technology and the energy savings it offers poultry producers. A good LED bulb is 80–85 percent more efficient than an incandescent bulb. However, not all LED bulbs are the same, and poultry producers should invest time and do research before purchasing LEDs. Any LED bulb is expensive compared to incandescent bulbs, and you don’t want to make a mistake. Let’s take a closer look at questions you should ask, issues that may arise, and energy savings that can be expected from LED technology.

Do Your Homework

Light is an important environmental factor in poultry production. Light affects production efficiency, animal welfare, and growth rate. The four main features associated with light are intensity, photoperiod, source, and spectrum (Manser, 1996). Color of light is determined by the various outputs from the different wavelengths that make up the visible spectrum. White light contains all the wavelengths of the visible spectrum, but it differs in color temperature (kelvin rating) depending on the power emitted from the different individual wavelengths within the spectrum. As a result, light is not only important to the poultry industry, but it’s also complicated.

Therefore, as a poultry producer, don’t make the decision to switch to LED bulbs in your chicken houses without asking some important questions and seeking advice from people you can trust. Talk to your service tech to be sure that your integrator will allow you to use LED bulbs. If you can use LEDs, verify from your integrator or service tech which brands are acceptable. Integrators often allow only certain brands of LEDs to be used on their contract farms. Fortunately, several major universities, including Mississippi State, Auburn, Georgia, Arkansas, Maryland, Delaware, and possibly others, have poultry Extension personnel who have worked with LED lighting since it first entered the poultry industry. These researchers have conducted numerous field tests and evaluations on a number of different LED products and can offer unbiased information on cost analysis, payback potential, and life expectancy of various LED products. This information is free for the asking, so take advantage of it and learn all you can to help you make the right choice.

If you decide that LEDs are the right choice for your operation, purchase from a manufacturer that has a proven track record in agricultural lighting and understands the lighting needs of today’s poultry industry. The LEDs must be able to provide enough light for baby chicks (2 foot-candles or more at the floor) for the first few days after hatch to help chicks easily find feed and water. However, the bulbs must also be able to properly dim to the very low levels needed later in the flock (0.03 foot-candles or less) to maintain optimum performance. Proper light intensity is critical to bird performance throughout the flock. Avoid bulbs that have not been proven in a chicken house environment. With issues such as dust, humidity, moisture, and ammonia, a chicken house environment is much harsher than a residential or commercial setting. Some bulbs are not designed to perform...
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in that type of environment and will not be able to withstand those conditions. Request results from field trial studies that can document bulb performance. Was bird performance acceptable? Was bird behavior affected in any way? Many producers who have switched from compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) to LEDs seem to observe that birds have a calmer behavior and disposition under LEDs than CFLs. This could possibly be because LED bulbs do not flicker in the same manner that CFLs do. Because of their keener eyesight, chickens are much more sensitive to flickering lights than are humans. The lack of flickering in LED bulbs may have a more calming effect on the birds.

To some extent, LED technology is ahead of light dimmer technology, and not all dimmers are compatible with all makes of LED bulbs. This is due, in part, to the fact that, unlike incandescent bulbs that dim in a linear fashion (meaning that, as the dimmer is turned down, let’s say 20 percent, the light output from the bulb decreases 20 percent), LED bulbs, for the most part, dim on a non-linear basis. This means the dimmer may have to be turned down a long way before you notice any actual dimming in the light output of LED bulbs. Dimmer manufacturers are catching up rapidly, but there are many older dimmers currently in the field that may need upgrading to properly dim LED bulbs. Therefore, it is extremely important that you verify that your dimmer can handle LED bulbs before making the switch. Some dimmers may be field serviceable and may only need an upgrade chip that you or your service tech can install. However, other dimmers may be old enough that a new, more advanced dimmer will need to be installed to handle the advanced LED technology.

Determine the kelvin (K) rating of bulb that your integrator will allow. The kelvin rating refers to the color temperature of the light (warm, neutral, or cool). A warm kelvin rating is in the 2,700K to 3,000K range, with an orange-red color similar to an incandescent or high-pressure sodium bulb. A neutral kelvin is in the 3,400K to 3,700K range. A cool kelvin rating is a blue-white color in the 5,000K to 6,000K range. It appears that the 5,000K bulbs are the most popular LED choice for broilers today, while the 2,700K LEDs are more popular in broiler breeder operations.

Again, not all LEDs are the same. A good residential bulb, such as an omni-directional LED, is likely not the best choice for a chicken house. Much of the light from an omni-directional LED (perhaps as much as 40 percent) tends to illuminate the ceiling and wall area, which may be fine in a residential dwelling but not so great in a chicken house where the majority of the light needs to be directed downward to the floor. Because of this fact, it may take a higher wattage bulb (usually at a higher price) to get enough light on the floor to meet the needs of the chicks. Many LEDs sold at hardware or discount stores are omni-directional. Therefore, investigate for yourself, ask questions, and learn all you can so that you can make informed purchasing decisions. Even the least expensive LED bulbs cost much more than incandescent bulbs. Be sure that you are paying for exactly what you and the chickens need.

Understand foot-candles of light and the importance of foot-candle readings throughout the production cycle. Your service tech most likely carries a light meter to measure the light intensity in your chicken house. A foot-candle is a measure of light intensity on a surface and can help standardize the value of various light sources. A foot-candle is equal to one lumen of light per square foot. A lumen is a measure of the total amount of visible light emitted by a source (the brightness). For example, a 10-watt non-dimmable A19 LED bulb may have a brightness level of 900 lumens. A 6-watt dimmable A19 LED bulb may be rated at 530 lumens.

Baby chicks are usually given 2 or more foot-candles of light for the first few days (4-14), depending on the integrator, genetic strain, and nutritional program. Light levels are usually greatest over the feed and water lines and somewhat less against the walls. It is important to have fairly uniform light levels throughout the house with no dark spots or overly bright areas. The LED industry continues to improve beam angle to provide a wider band of light output that better eliminates dark spots and minimizes overly bright areas. The correct beam angle helps direct light specifically toward the birds and reduces the amount of light wasted by illuminating the walls and ceiling.

LED Performance

Energy savings associated with LED bulbs is as much as 80-85 percent compared to incandescent bulbs. This fact has been proven numerous times in field trials across the poultry industry from Texas to the Delmarva Peninsula. The energy savings associated with LEDs have never been in question. The question has always been whether the birds will perform as well under LEDs as they do under incandescent bulbs. The answer is yes—if light levels are adequate during brood and grow periods, if the light dimmer does its job correctly, and if the birds are cared for properly. Birds perform just as well under LEDs as under other typical light sources found in chicken houses. While most LED work has been with broilers, recent work has been ongoing in both pullets and broiler breeders. Early results appear just as promising in pullets and breeders as in broilers.

We are currently collaborating with a broiler breeder farm in Mississippi that replaced all its high-pressure sodium bulbs on a four-house farm with LEDs almost a year ago. That operation is...
seeing a consistent savings of $1,500 per month on its electric bill. Production parameters on the current flock under LED lights, to this point, are comparable to previous high-pressure sodium light flocks. The farm is using Overdrive 10-watt 2,700K A19 non-dimmable bulbs on 10-foot centers in two rows of lights above the nests (Figure 1). It also has two rows of lights above the slats between the nests and the cool cells that run the length of the cool cells on 5-foot centers (Figure 2). Again, the pullet and breeder folks tend to prefer the 2,700K range, while the broiler folks prefer the 5,000K bulb.

However, a recent USDA study using broilers grown to heavy weights under three different LED light sources (one brand of 2,700K and two brands of 5,000K bulbs) and incandescent light found no difference between light sources on blood physiological variables. This indicated that the three LED light sources evaluated may be suitable for replacement of incandescent light in commercial poultry operations to reduce energy cost and optimize production efficiency without inducing physiological stress on heavyweight broilers (Olanrewaju et al., 2015). There are several LED manufacturers that currently have bulbs of various kelvin ratings in place in Mississippi poultry houses, including Luma Vue, ONCE Innovations, Overdrive, Verbatim, and possibly others.

The poultry science department at Mississippi State University has two commercial broiler houses and operates as a contract broiler grower for a Mississippi poultry integrator. This allows the department to conduct applied research on various products of interest to the poultry industry. With permission of our integrator, we have been monitoring flock performance under LED lighting for over a year in these houses. We have been using Overdrive 23-watt 5,000K CFL brood lights and Overdrive 8-watt dimmable 5,000K A19 grow lights. Our flock performance results for four flocks during the past year are listed in Table 1. Performance for flocks 1 and 2 was near average for the weeks the flocks sold. Performance for flocks 3 and 4 was above average for flocks sold those weeks.

Currently, lighting efficiency improvements appear to offer the best opportunity for energy savings in the chicken house. Therefore, we continue to investigate ways to improve energy savings related to poultry house lighting while maintaining flock performance. Recently, and again with permission of our integrator, we replaced the 23-watt CFL brood lights with Overdrive 10-watt non-dimmable 5,000K A19 LED brood lights. The foot-candle readings for light levels at various locations throughout the brood area of the house from the manufacturer.

### Summary

Within the poultry industry, LED bulbs offer remarkable energy savings to producers while maintaining flock performance. However, “buyer beware” is sound advice that you should heed if you are considering switching to LED lighting. Talk to your service tech or integrator before making any type of lighting change. Most integrators today are comfortable with some, but perhaps not all, brands of LEDs. Make sure your integrator will accept the brand of LED bulb you are considering. Again, do your homework and look closely at price and warranty. All LEDs, regardless of price, will save huge amounts of energy that will translate into big savings on your electric bill. However, you should choose a bulb that has a track record in an agricultural environment such as a chicken house. Omnidirectional LEDs may not be the best choice because they direct too much light to the walls and ceiling, and most of this light (along with the energy it took to produce it) is wasted in a poultry house setting. In a poultry house, most of the light needs to be directed to the floor (not the walls or ceiling) because that’s where the birds are. Choose a bulb that is competitively priced, can withstand the harsh environment, is compatible with your light dimmer, and can deliver the light levels you need during both the brood and grow periods. This is likely not the least expensive bulb on the market, but it need not be the most expensive bulb, either. Ask questions of your integrator, other growers who have switched to LEDs, and university/extension personnel with LED lighting backgrounds. These folks can help you make informed decisions on what will work best for your operation.

### References


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In 2009 after the Legislature reduced the sales tax on farm implements, the Mississippi Poultry Association asked for a letter ruling from the State Tax Commission on what the agency would and would not consider a farm implement in a poultry house. Letter rulings, which state the agency’s position, continue in effect for seven years.

Early in 2016, MPA asked that the letter be renewed and the Department of Revenue, as the agency is now known, issued a new letter last month in response to MPAs request.

Nothing will change with what has been subject to the lower 1.5 percent sales tax rate. While the implements used in a poultry house change, the letter is a fair interpretation of the 2009 law that still covers equipment in use today. The letter was based on a request developed by an MPA committee of growers and representatives from companies who build houses for and supply parts to growers.

To be eligible for the lower tax rate, growers must still sign an annual affidavit at the locations where they purchase replacement parts. The letter can be found on the MPA website, www.mspoultry.org, under the grower tab.

The USDA’s proposed changes to the rules governing the raising of organic poultry and livestock have raised concerns by a number of poultry industry and elected officials. MPA sent comments on the proposed changes which many groups are concerned could later spread to more than just organic production methods. Gov. Phil Bryant filed comments asking the USDA to extend the comment period because of the concerns. The comment period was extended to July 13.

The USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service’s proposed rule on organic livestock and poultry practices sets out space requirements and requires chickens to have outdoor access. The rule would negate many of the investments companies have made under current organic rules.

The MPA, the National Chicken Council, the National Turkey Federation, the North American Meat Institute, the US Poultry and Egg Association and the United Egg Producers filed comments. Gov. Bryant’s comments noted the potential burden it could have on Mississippi poultry producers. He stated, “The proposed rule, if implemented, could create significant economic, animal health, and consumer food safety concerns.”

MPA believes the new proposed rule will work against the increased biosecurity required by the USDA’s own “2016 HPAI Preparedness and Response Plan” developed by the Veterinary Service of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). The plan notes, “APHIS concludes that wild birds were responsible for introducing the HPAI virus into the environment, and from there it spread to commercial poultry ...” It seems cavalier and counterintuitive for the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service to set guidelines that would require poultry to come into direct contact with the source of the most catastrophic virus our industry has seen.

The new rule proposes a range of new standards with the most significant ones for poultry being living conditions and transportation. Under the proposed rule for example, layers (3.0-4.5lbs) will be required a minimum of 1 square foot (sqf) of indoor space (depending on housing layout), as well as 2.25 sqf of outdoor space. Broilers for every 5lbs will require a minimum of 1 sqf of inside space. The proposed rule would require transporting of organic poultry to slaughter facilities in seasonal-appropriate ventilation to protect against cold or heat stress. It also would require poultry to be fed if spent more than 12 hours on a trailer/truck/shipping container, even if the module is not moving.

The proposal is to redefine how organic producers and handlers must treat livestock and poultry to ensure their health and wellbeing throughout life, including transport and slaughter. The USDA sees this as an opportunity to bolster consumer confidence and strengthen the market for organic products. However, MPA and allies feel it will lead to higher poultry mortality by exposing birds to preventative diseases and redefining the term organic.

One concern is that the requirements could eventually impact how the broader poultry industry does business in Mississippi and throughout the country.

MPA’s comments note that the new rule seems to change the definition of organic to mean free-range or pasture-raised. Organic should apply to what the chickens are fed, and if the consumer wants pasture-raised or free-range poultry or eggs that should be a separate category of certified product available to them.

To learn more about the proposed rule, please visit https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2016/04/13/2016-08023/national-organic-program-organic-livestock-and-poultry-practices#h-25
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GOLF TOURNAMENT CHANGES

Two large fundraising events happen every September for MPA, the MPA Convention and the Mississippi Poultry Foundation Auction.

The annual meeting is the largest event MPA has each year. You can register and pay online this year at www.mspoultry.org. Funds raised above the cost of the convention allow MPA to provide many services to our members and promote our industry.

The MPA staff has been working and planning since last year to make our 2016 MPA Convention successful. Last year we had over 400 members and guests arrive in Destin to re-connect with friends you haven’t seen, in some cases, since last September.

The Thursday night kick-off reception on the Barefoot’s Deck will have lots of food and drinks and we hope a beautiful sunset over the emerald waters surrounding us.

The business part of the meetings will be on Friday and Saturday mornings with speakers and business programs. The MPA Allied Industry Person of the Year Award and the Hall of Fame presentations will be awarded at the business meeting on Saturday. We look forward to these awards for 2016.

As always golf and fishing are Friday afternoon’s activities. Last year’s fishing tournament was the largest group we have had in years. The fishermen will be fed by International Paper and supplied with drinks from R & L Poultry, and will set off on a five-hour search for the largest fish, most fish caught etc. The prizes for fishermen will be awarded at Saturday night’s awards program. The prizes are sponsored by American Packaging Company and Briggs Equipment Co. These companies have been very generous with prizes such as The Green Egg Grill as the top fishing prizes and many other items. Last year, fishermen won more than $8,000 in prizes.

Golf is changing this year. A one day tournament will be held on Friday, September 16th. Vendworks, LLC, McNeely Plastics, and International Paper will sponsor a one day golf tournament that will be bigger and better.

The ladies in attendance will be hosted by Cobb-Vantress and Huvepharma to a brunch at Bud & Ally’s at Seaside. After brunch, enjoy shopping on your own or with friends at the wonderful shops afforded at Seaside. There is a limit this year of 60 ladies so sign up to get your spot reserved on the buses to Seaside.

I would like to say thank you in advance to all of our sponsors. We could not have successful meetings and fun activities without your support.

After all the business meetings and tournament fun is over and the prizes awarded it is time to get serious about fundraising for the Mississippi Poultry Foundation. Saturday night’s auction raises scholarship money that is given each year to four deserving students attending or about to begin college. Grower’s children and grandchildren are the recipients of the scholarships given each year. Last year our members were very generous providing Live and Silent auction items.

Again, this year we extend an invitation to our meeting we hope to see everyone in Destin, FL on September 15-18, 2016. Please complete the form for registration and mail it back to me at the MPA office or go online to www.mspoultry.org to register.

Call or email me if you have any questions. My number is 601.932.7560 or 601.214.8883 and my email is beard@mspoultry.org.
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For more information, call MPA at 601-932-7560.

Please indicate your preferred golf foursome below for the Vendworks, McNeely Plastic, and International Paper Friday Tournament: Please note: golf teams are arranged by the tournament sponsors and the professionals at the golf course. While trying to honor your request choosing your foursome does not indicate you will be on that team. 1. ____________ 2. ____________ 3. ____________ 4. ____________
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The Mississippi Poultry Foundation Scholarship Committee selected four recipients this year. The winners of the 2016 Mississippi Poultry Foundation Scholarship are Ms. Lauren Grace Terry, Ms. Hannah Hoang, Ms. Ember West, and Ms. Kaylin Hickman. Three of the four recipients are children of MPA Grower Members and the fourth will be majoring in Poultry Science at Mississippi State University. This year’s recipients were judged on their ACT score, GPA, knowledge of the poultry industry, and personal statement.

Kaylin Leanne Hickman
Kaylin is the daughter of W.G. and Melissa Hickman. Her parents are Sanderson Farms producers. Kaylin is from Wiggins, MS. Kaylin graduated from Forrest County Agricultural High School in May and will attend Pearl River Community College in the Fall of 2016. She will pursue an Associate's degree to become a Physical Therapist Assistant.

Hannah Hoang
Hannah is the daughter of Shane and Nina Hoang. Her parents are Sanderson Farms producers. She is from Summit, MS. Hannah graduated from Parklane Academy in May and will attend the University of Mississippi in the Fall of 2016. She plans to pursue a degree in Biology. Hannah was the Student Body President at Parklane. Previously, she held the position of vice president and treasurer. At Parklane, Hannah was a member of Mu Alpha Theta, Math and Science Team, Honor Society, and Quiz Bowl. She is actively involved in her community where she is a member of the Crown Club, pianist for her church’s youth choir, Special Olympics Baseball coach, and a Vacation Bible School Group Leader for the last four years. Hannah’s interests are playing in the band, running track, and swim team.

Lauren Grace Terry
She is from Russellville, AL. Lauren Grace is the daughter of Keith and Dana Long Terry. Lauren Grace graduated in May from Hatton High School and will attend Mississippi State University in the Fall of 2016. She will pursue a degree in Poultry Science. Lauren Grace has been involved in Alabama Girl’s State, Lions Club Leadership Forum, held numerous leadership positions in 4-H, as well as in Future Farmers of America. Lauren Grace volunteers at animal shelters where she trains and grooms dogs, and participates as a Vacation Bible School teacher at Mt. Hebron Church. Her interests include showing, raising, and breeding chickens, hunting, fishing, and working with animals.

Ember West
Ember is the daughter of Rod and Eva West. Her parents are Sanderson Farms producers. She is from Sumrall, MS. Ember graduated from Sumrall High School in May and will attend Jones County Junior College in the Fall of 2016. She excelled academically where she was on the President’s List, received awards in US History, English, Animal Science, Human A&P, and for Oral Communication. Ember volunteers at the Lawrence County Animal Shelter, Sumrall Softball League, Sumrall High School as a mentor, and FFA Children’s Barnyard. She is member of the National Society of High School Scholars, Future Farmers of America, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and the American Quarter Horse Youth Association.
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The Mississippi Poultry Association would like to introduce Thomas Mills, our new Grower Relations Coordinator. He replaces Bill Rosenblatt, who was accepted into the University of Mississippi School of Law.

Thomas’s first day was May 23. Thomas was born and raised in Greenville, Mississippi but, graduated high school in New Albany, Mississippi. He attended Millsaps College, where he earned a degree in economics with a minor in political science. While attending Millsaps he served as the captain of the Millsap’s Men’s Tennis team and participated in a wide range of student activities.

Through his study of economics and political science, Thomas became interested in public policy and how it effects his fellow Mississippians. He worked while in college for U.S. Sen. Thad Cochran and Gov. Phil Bryant as an intern and for the Mississippi Legislature as a head page.

He is eager to assist growers as they face the growing impact of federal and state policies on their operations.

“Being able to work with Mississippi’s #1 Agricultural Commodity is an exciting experience and I look forward to being able to get to know the intricate parts of our integrated system. Mississippi’s poultry growers are a vital contributor to the poultry industry’s impact on Mississippi economy. I look forward to meeting with growers and listening to their concerns for as we move forward together,” Thomas said.

You may contact Thomas at mills@mspoultry.org, or call (601) 932-7560 or his cell at (601) 942-9269. He looks forward to hearing from you!

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The 2016 Legislative session, one of the most contentious in recent history, had some good outcomes for the poultry industry.

What shaped the session were the 2015 elections that gave Republicans a 3/5th majority in the House of Representatives and flat-line of tax collections. These two factors played into many decisions that were made on taxes, agency budgets and road and bridge maintenance.

The Democratic minority demanded that bills be read aloud as a delaying tactic. This happened twice in the House and once in the Senate prompted by specific bills, but Democrats said they felt shut out of decision-making. The 74-member House Republican Caucus adopted a procedure that they would not take up bills that did not get at least 50 votes in closed-door GOP Caucus meetings.

Starting in 2018, the 3 percent bracket on the state income tax will be reduced until it goes away in 2022. This is estimated to be a $150 savings for each taxpayer. The tax bill also gradually does away with the $2.50 per $1,000 of capital that corporations and partnerships pay. The franchise tax is eliminated in 2028. Poultry growers and others who are self-employed will see a tax deduction starting in 2017 that will equal 17, then 34, and finally 50 percent of the federal self-employment income tax deduction in 2019.

As the tax bill passed the House, House Ways and Means Committee Chair Jeff Smith, R-Columbus, announced that the House was creating a tax reform study committee to make a final report in September on further tax changes. Other study committees will look at ways to increase transportation funding and changes the funding formula for public schools known as the Mississippi Adequate Education Program.

The Mississippi Poultry Association was involved in the coalition to increase revenue to repair state and local bridges and maintain highways. Joe Sanderson, Sanderson Farms CEO, chaired a coalition effort pushing for $375 million more annually for roads, but lawmakers never reached a consensus on how to pay for maintenance and repairs.

Much of the session was a search for money to fund state government that ended with cuts to many agencies, including some of those that serve the state’s largest agricultural industry – poultry. The Senate passed a plan to make the Board of Animal Health advisory group and merge it and the Forestry Commission into the Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) and call it the Department of Agriculture and Forestry.

As originally introduced, the Senate agency merger bill also included the Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) in the new agency, but that was changed. The House did not go along with the merger and the bill died, but it is expected to return next year.

Because tax revenues were projected to be less in fiscal year 2017 compared to FY 2016, the Legislature cut most agency budgets. The MDAC took an 18.3 percent cut, the BOAH took an 11.2 percent cut. While the state university system took a 1.5 percent cut, the agricultural divisions at Mississippi State University (MSU), such as the College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM) and the Cooperative Extension Service, received the same funding as this year or received reductions of less than 1 percent.

In a bill to issue $308 million in bonds, the Legislature approved $16 million in bond funds for Phase II and Phase III of construction of a new building for the Departments of Poultry Science and of Animal and Dairy Science. Funding for planning and design was included in Phase I earlier. The new building will be built near the CVM.

Some of the legislation of interest to the poultry industry that passed included:

- Exempt Christmas trees, hay and cut flowers sold on a farm from the sales tax.
- Include all-terrain vehicles under the penalties in the chop-shop law making it illegal to alter or remove the vehicle identification number.
- Prevent local governments from passing laws banning or restricting GMO crops.
- Extending the harvest permit program under the Miss. Department of Transportation until 2019. Despite widespread support, a bill to allow feed trucks to carry 84,000 pounds to farms did not get adopted.
- Reduce unemployment taxes and create a workforce training fund.
- Clarify that a landowner does not owe a duty of care to a trespasser injured on the landowner’s property. The change does not apply to children.
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In 1999, we opened a loan production office in Carthage, MS to assist Mississippi poultry producers with financing. The new office was focused on providing poultry producers traditional service and values combined with new lending strategies and opportunities. Word spread quickly throughout central Mississippi, resulting in many producers moving their business to FFB, as well as many new banking relationships. Pleased with the competitive rates and exceptional service, our customers spread the word throughout Mississippi. Our office, which originally serviced only the Carthage area, grew to include customers from every corner of the state.

This year marks our seventeenth year in Mississippi. In 2007, we opened our current location at 510 Hwy 35 South in Carthage. Our new location continues to serve the needs of poultry producers, as well as the retail banking needs of individuals and commercial customers across the region. Since opening in 2007 with a 7% market share in Leake County, we’ve grown to over 30% market share in just eight years – the leading shareholder among all banks in Leake County. We are truly grateful that so many across our great state have chosen to do business with us.

First Financial’s presence in Mississippi has grown, but our focus has remained steady. Poultry is and will continue to be our driving force and greatest concern. We have a dedicated team of lenders and support staff who specialize in poultry loans. Michael Barnes, Ike Harrell, and Ben Chandler lead each customer throughout the loan process, as well as the servicing of the loan from start to finish. We take pride in meeting the needs of poultry producers and understand that farming sometimes requires more time on the farm than in the bank lobby. That’s why we gladly meet our customers at times and locations that are convenient for them, not us. Many of our loan applications are taken on the hood of a pickup truck or on a kitchen table. This customer-focused service means that some of our customers have never set foot in our bank office – but we’re available 24/7/365 to help when they need us.

We offer unrivaled customer service that complements the lending options we offer. We provide financing for pullet, breeder, and broiler houses with new construction loans, purchase or refinance of an existing operation, as well as retrofits and upgrades. We are also designated Preferred Lenders by the Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Farm Service Agency (FSA). This means our loan process has been streamlined for more efficient service and faster financing for our customers.

Servicing poultry producers is in our roots. It’s why we’re here in the first place and the foundation of all we do. Our driving force is a desire to help our customers build a dream and see those dreams fulfilled. We thank you for allowing First Financial Bank the opportunity to serve and support you as you grow Mississippi's number one agricultural commodity.
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Local Working Groups (LWG) for USDA’s Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) help shape implementation of federal Farm Bill conservation programs in your area that benefit poultry farmers. The NRCS has information on how you can join with other farmers and conservation groups to ensure that the Farm Bill’s conservation programs assist poultry farming in protecting our natural resources. Some of the practices funded include windrowing practices, waste treatment (composters, incinerators, and dry stacks), poultry litter treatment and energy audits and practices.

The annual meeting is open to the public and if you are interested in attending, call the local NRCS office to ask for information on the meeting. Individuals or groups wanting to become an LWG member may submit a request to the LWG Chairperson and the NRCS District Conservationist that explains their interest and outlines their credentials for becoming a member of the Local Working Group.

The NRCS rules require the LWG membership to be diverse and focus on a wide range of agricultural interests and natural resource issues existing in the local community. To ensure that recommendations of the LWG take into account the needs of diverse groups served by USDA, membership shall include, to the extent practicable, individuals with demonstrated ability to represent the conservation concerns of particular historically underserved groups and individuals including, but not limited to, minorities, women, persons with disabilities, and socially and economically disadvantaged groups. Eligibility is limited to persons who are engaged in livestock or other agricultural production. Eligible land includes cropland, rangeland, pasture, forestland, and other farm or ranch lands.
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Kenny Williamson
First Vice President, Commercial Lending Group
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John Milner serves as counsel to the Mississippi Poultry Association and has special expertise in poultry-related environmental issues. Partners Gene Wasson and Richard Cirilli, Jr. also have impressive abilities in the environmental sector.

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The U.S. Supreme Court in a significant shift in Clean Water Act enforcement sided with a property owner in a May 31 unanimous decision that landowners do not have to wait to be penalized before challenging the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers determination their land is included in waters of the U.S.

The U.S. Supreme Court in a narrow, unanimous ruling approved pre-enforcement review of Clean Water Act (CWA) findings by EPA and the Corps of Engineers on whether particular waters are subject to permit limits and other CWA protections, but the decision relies in part on an agreement between agencies on how to conduct jurisdictional determinations that the White House has already signaled it may review. The May 31 decision in Army Corps of Engineers v. Hawkes Co., written by Chief Justice John Roberts, allows property owners who receive a CWA jurisdictional determination (JD) saying their lands include waterbodies subject to the CWA to challenge those findings in court immediately, rather than waiting for EPA or the Corps to initiate permitting or enforcement action. The decision marks a significant shift from many lower courts’ earlier decisions that had previously held a permit or enforcement action was necessary for a JD suit to go forward.

Roberts’ decision says JDs are “final agency action” that carry legal consequences for recipients and can therefore be the subject of a lawsuit under the Court’s landmark 1997 decision, Bennett v. Spear. However, that conclusion is narrow because it relies in part on a memorandum of agreement (MOA) between EPA and the Corps that binds agencies to follow a JD’s conclusions in enforcement actions and other litigation for at least five years after its publication according to Roberts’ opinion. The agencies’ MOA means that a “negative” JD that finds no jurisdictional waters creates a binding “safe harbor” that ensures a property owner can fill in wetlands or discharge pollutants without fear of federal CWA penalties:

Although the property owner may still face a citizen suit under the Act, such a suit -- unlike actions brought by the Government -- cannot impose civil liability for wholly past violations. In other words, a negative JD both narrows the field of potential plaintiffs and limits the potential liability a landowner faces for discharging pollutants without a permit. Each of those effects is a “legal consequence” . . . It follows that affirmative JDs have legal consequences as well: They represent the denial of the safe harbor that negative JDs afford.

In the case, Hawkes, a Minnesota peat mining firm, is contesting a JD finding jurisdictional waters on its land that it argues effectively bars collecting peat on the affected property. Roberts’ decision stops short of embracing the argument Hawkes and other JD challengers have raised that JDs are inherently final action carrying legal consequences regardless of the MOA, because they represent a pledge from regulators to pursue federal enforcement action against unpermitted discharges. The challengers argued that a JD effectively denies property owners full use of their land unless they go through a potentially expensive permit process, and said that denial should be considered a “legal consequence” in itself.

However, the Court’s reliance on the MOA could allow EPA and the Corps to dodge judicial review of future JDs despite unanimous decision, by amending its terms to remove the “safe harbor” provision Roberts cited. Deputy Solicitor General Malcolm L. Stewart said such a move was possible in the March 30 oral argument in Hawkes, telling the Justices: “If the agencies wanted to fix it, they easily could, simply by issuing a new [MOA] clarifying their view of the JDs’ effect.”

Roberts goes on to say that JD recipients have no adequate means of contesting regulators’ view of CWA jurisdiction other than to challenge the JD itself in court -- a necessary finding to allow suits to proceed under the Administrative Procedure Act (APA). The Department of Justice (DOJ) argued on behalf of the Corps that property owners who believe their land includes no protected waters can either seek a permit and then sue over its terms, or discharge without a permit and raise jurisdiction as a defense against a federal enforcement action. Roberts disagreed: “Neither alternative is adequate. As we have long held, parties need not await enforcement proceedings before challenging final agency action where such proceedings carry the risk of ‘serious criminal and civil penalties.’

Finally, Roberts states that DOJ’s argument that the recipient of a JD is legally no worse off than a property owner who never sought a JD and must rely on their own judgment of what the CWA requires is “[t]rue enough. But such a ‘count your blessings’ argument is not an adequate rejoinder to the assertion of a right to judicial review under the APA.”

EPA and the Corps previously issued a controversial joint rule defining what is a “water of the United States” (WOTUS) subject to the CWA, but that rule is itself under challenge from a host of stakeholders, including MPA, and expected to reach the Supreme Court. The position on the new Roberts decision in Hawkes by those who oppose WOTUS rule has been strongly stated by Sen. John Barrasso (R-WY), one of Congress’ most prominent critics of the WOTUS rule:

The Obama administration may think it’s above the law, but the Supreme Court confirmed today it certainly is not. This decision is just the latest blow to the president’s regulatory rampage. Families and small businesses across the country shouldn’t have to fight Washington just to use their own property. Now the Supreme Court should go one step further and strike down the entire Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule before more Americans are strangled by this unprecedented Washington water grab.

If you would like to have more information concerning the Hawkes decision, including a copy of Roberts’ opinion, please contact John Milner, MPA Environmental Counsel, at jmilner@brunini.com or by phone at (601) 291-4696.
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We have a lot to be thankful for entering the summer. Not least among them was the absence this winter of a severe high pathological Avian Influenza (AI) outbreak. Thanks to the priority placed on biosecurity by growers, integrators and those who supply the industry, AI was limited to a small region in Indiana.

Many of our grower members received emails weekly from the All In or All Gone Campaign that focused on providing insight and biosecurity protocols to help reduce potential AI outbreaks. Below is a recap of some of the messages that can be used to refresh and revamp your biosecurity for the Fall and Winter. If you wish to revisit each email message, please go to www.allinallgone.com/ai-education-campaign/

- Catching avian influenza on your farm means your chickens are ALL GONE. The flock will be depopulated, and your farm will be quarantined.
- Each person must follow the strictest biosecurity procedures when they enter the poultry house.
- Anyone working on your poultry farm should be as knowledgeable about biosecurity as you are.
- Entering your poultry house safely is the #1 thing you can do to be ALL IN and protect your farm. Some critical steps include wearing protective foot coverings, using dedicated shoes or using a disinfectant foot bath upon every house entry.
- The avian influenza virus can survive for weeks, even months in certain conditions. On cold and moist ground your farm, the virus could last for a month. Depending on the temperature, it could last for a week or more on the floorboard of your car or truck. That goes for the soles of your shoes too.
- HPAI, Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, strikes quickly. In fact, the virus is so deadly and swift that by the time you spot the clinical signs, your birds may already be dying.
- Be vigilant when it comes to reducing the risk associated with wild birds on your farm. Even one small “crack in the armor” of your line of defense can be an open invitation to an avian influenza outbreak on your farm.
- Employees must be told to stay away from flea markets known to sell live chickens and chicks on the premises.
- Keeping feet, hands and clothing clean is very important, but the same is true for everything that you carry into your poultry house.
- Foot baths are a great way to separate the outside (dirty) from the inside (clean) of the poultry houses, and one of the most important things you can do to prevent AI from infiltrating. But, the foot baths must be properly maintained or they are completely ineffective.

The only way to contain an outbreak of avian influenza is to recognize the signs quickly and act immediately. It is better to have a false alarm than to lose a day or two of response time.
- Don’t let pets into poultry houses (cats, dogs and etc.) There’s no telling where their paws have been.
- Rodents can be a sneaky and potentially deadly carrier of many poultry diseases such as Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). Effective control of rodents in your poultry houses relies on constant monitoring and evaluation. The successful containment was a true testament to the industry’s awareness and successful planning.
WHERE’S YOUR LITTER TREATMENT TAKING YOU?

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  - Pulls moisture from the air and litter so activation happens in any conditions—wet or dry
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The poultry industry is only as adaptive as the birds and those who tend the birds can be. Since the beginning of commercial poultry production, adaptation has been the driving force. Few, maybe none, in the fledgling years of the poultry industry could have foreseen where we stand today, yet they knew it could always be done better, healthier, and more efficiently than the previous year, month, and even day. Quite honestly our current achievements are built upon their challenges and discoveries. The old saying Rome wasn’t built in a day sure does apply to the poultry industry.

Recently, I had the pleasure to attend the Mississippi Poultry Retirees luncheon where those responsible for laying the foundations of innovation, that we still build upon today, congregated to enjoy a good meal and fellowship.

The group was started several years ago by Mr. Bud West, Mr. Tom Sparks and Mr. Darrell Hendry. Mr. West serves as the Chair. Unlike other retiree gatherings based upon company affiliation, their group was developed to be an all-encompassing one built on the grounds of a common bond, poultry. In a way, many of their members grew up together. They came from the same counties, graduated together and worked in the poultry industry their whole careers. Collectively these men worked in many capacities to build the industry we know today.

I had the privilege to speak that day, as well as over the phone with Mr. Tom Sparks (retired from McCarty Farms), Dr. Reagan Sadler (retired from Central Industries and currently Adjunct Professor at Mississippi State University), Mr. Bud West (retired from Sanderson Farms), Mr. Darrell Hendry (retired from Upjohn Pharmaceuticals) and many others. Through our conversations, I began to learn firsthand about formative years and some of the significant changes they have seen in poultry industry in their lifetime.

Mr. Sparks graduated from Mississippi State in 1955 with a degree in Poultry Science. He grew up on a poultry farm in rural Scott County. His parents were pioneers in the industry. “When my parents started growing chickens, they would receive their chicks from mail order. They bought feed from a feed store. Then when the chickens were ready to sell. The feed store would help them sell the chickens.”

He also noted that up until the early 1950s poultry farmers used pine straw collected by themselves. We had to change it every week. All our pine straw we raked up in the woods. It wasn’t until the early 1950s people started going to wood shavings. Originally, poultry had to be fed by hand on my parents’ farm. Water was also provided to the chickens by hand. Eventually automatic drinker lines came in.

When he graduated from Mississippi State in 1955, the industry was at slow crawl. Poultry houses would hold on average 2,500 to 5,000 birds. Most families would have just one house. One thing that happened to cause the industry to take off Mr. Sparks said, “Was that cotton farming was going out, at least for the small ones. Small farmers were having a tough time to make it, so it was a natural for them shift to poultry.”

Dr. Reagan Sadler began his college education in 1955 at Mississippi State. He received his Masters at Mississippi State and received his Ph.D. from Auburn University.

When asked what the biggest changes he witnessed in his career he responded, “Relatively speaking there are very few changes today. However, when I started, I saw every disease in the textbook. Many vaccines beginning in the 1980s and 1990s eliminated a good deal of the diseases. However, the biggest change in the last ten years is the antibiotic movement. It has been successful because of perception. People are becoming more aware of what they eat. Activists have “claimed” that the use of antibiotics results in antibiotic resistance. Though scientifically unfounded, the customer perceives what he hears, he believes what he hears. So, they have successfully made people think we use them in a discrepant manner, which has resulted in a shift from antibiotics all over perception and not science.”

The biggest change that Mr. Bud West has noticed were the changes from old, conventional houses to automated, climate controlled houses. He believes that the changes in the size of the bird that is produced has much to do with that. He also has seen a change in the processing of birds with fewer whole birds being sold and more being processed into smaller parts than they used to be. “The industry, as a whole, has seen this in the change of consumer demands on the industry, which has revolutionized the processing and growing of bigger birds.”

Mr. Darrell Hendry, a pharmaceutical salesman for the former company Upjohn, entered the poultry industry after receiving a degree from Mississippi State in 1962. The most significant change Mr. Hendry has seen in recent years in the industry is the push to move away from antibiotics.

The poultry industry is built upon adaptation. We started from a vision, a vision to create an affordable, nutritious, and most importantly a safe food source. Today, that vision has not changed and never will as we continue to adapt to meet the varying needs of our customer base and the poultry we are responsible to raise.

I would like to thank Mr. Bud West, Mr. Tom Sparks, Mr. Darrell Hendry and Dr. Reagan Sadler for providing their historical perspectives and the kindness and generosity of Mr. Bud West and Mr. Darrell Hendry who provided me the opportunity to attend the luncheon.

If you are a poultry retiree and interested in learning about the next meeting of the Mississippi Poultry Retirees luncheon, please call the MPA office at 601-932-7560 for details.
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Now you can, free of charge, with statistics generated by the National Chicken Council and US Poultry and Egg Association. It is easy to use and a fantastic resource that sheds light on the economic importance of our industry.

To begin, go to [http://www.chickenfeedsamerica.com/](http://www.chickenfeedsamerica.com/), select Mississippi, then the type of table you would like the information to be presented to you, then select either congressional, senate, house, or county for the program to generate your data.

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**POULTRY MANAGEMENT SCHOOL SUCCESSFUL**

The 2016 Mississippi Poultry Association’s Poultry Management School took place on May 17 and 18 at the College of Veterinary Medicine at Mississippi State University. Over one hundred representatives from Mar-Jac, Peco, Sanderson, Tyson, and Wayne, along with more than thirty allied member companies, attended this year’s school. The first day provided attendees an opportunity to learn more about addressing Managing Antibiotic Free Birds (Henry Welch – Peco Foods, Dr. Joel Cline – Wayne Farms, LLC, and Kris Torbert – Wayne Farms, LLC), Litter Management (Dr. Trisha Marsh Johnson – Veterinary and Environmental Technical Solutions), Litter, Down Time and Density (Dr. Lenoard Fussell – Cobb-Vantress, Inc.), Salmonella (Dr. Martha Pulido – Poultry Research Diagnostic Lab), and Water Pressure (Dr. Jody Purswell – United States Department of Agriculture).

Following these seminars, MPA’s allied industry sponsored dinner where crawfish, shrimp, and barbecue was served. This delicious dinner provided old and new friends alike, an opportunity to catch up on the latest developments in the industry and to discuss the topics that were covered earlier in the day.

The second day of the seminar, attendees heard presentations on Animal Welfare from a Buyers Perspective (Bryce Burnett - Chick-fil-A), Enteritis and Dermatitis (Audrey McElroy – Merck Animal Health), Al Update (Dr. Jim Watson – Mississippi Board of Animal Health), Disease Update (Dr. Natalie Armour – Poultry Research and Diagnostic Lab), and Variant Reo (Dr. Joel Cline – Wayne Farms, LLC).

Following Dr. Cline’s presentation, First South Farm Credit sponsored an appetizing lunch of chicken and vegetables at the Hill Poultry Science Building. Door prizes were then given out to mark the end of the 2016 Management School.

MPA would like to thank all the participants this year that helped make Management School a great success. Special thanks to all our guest speakers that provided crucial educational material and training and our allied members that help make this event possible:


Special thanks to Cobb-Vantress, Inc. and International Paper Co. for providing breakfast and snacks during the breaks. As well as, First South Farm Credit for providing lunch to all the attendees.
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The Mississippi Poultry Association was excited to participate in this year’s Magnolia Beef and Poultry Expo in Raleigh, Mississippi. The event was held at the Smith County Agricultural Complex on April 7, 2016. Attendees were able to visit with over twenty different organizations, including MPA, who had a wide range of knowledge from cattle and poultry production to agricultural lending. Throughout the day, fun and useful door prizes and promotional items were distributed to guests, along with lunch for those who came with an appetite.

Individuals also had the opportunity to attend educational seminars and a trade show featuring agricultural equipment for beef and poultry producers, pharmaceuticals for cattle and other valuable information throughout the day.

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

I would like to thank you all for the opportunity to serve you in the role as Grower Relations Coordinator for the last three years. As of June 30, I will be leaving MPA to attend law school.

I cannot express in words how much I have enjoyed this job. Honestly, I haven’t viewed it as a job since my second day but rather an interest and a passion. Serving you and the industry has truly been a blessing for me that has taught me more than I could have learned in school or previous jobs. Many of you I have had the pleasure of meeting, while others I have unfortunately not, but I want you all to know that I am greatly indebted to each of you.

Thank you for the kindness and support you have shown me but more importantly thank you for the jobs you help create, the emphasis placed on honesty and integrity and for continuing to make Poultry Mississippi’s number one agricultural commodity.

I look forward to rejoicing in your future successes!

Bill Rosenblatt
UPCOMING EVENTS

MPA BREEDER/HATCHERY SEMINAR
Poultry Diagnostic Lab
Pearl, MS
August 16, 2016 at 8:00 a.m.

Civic Center
Collins, MS
August 17, 2016 at 8:00 a.m.

MPA ANNUAL CONVENTION
Hilton Sandestin
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September 15-18, 2016

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Sanderson Farms
Jon Wilson
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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!