The end of summer is in sight and while upcoming cooler temperatures may bring a slight reduction in electrical demand, it does not mean that electrical system maintenance and inspection should be postponed. Electrical systems failures due to bad weather or poorly maintained electrical systems can be costly no matter the time of year. Here are a few construction tips for new and existing farms that can help mitigate fire risks and reduce the likelihood of future headaches from electrical system failures.

Is your grounding system in working order?

Some growers know the damage that lightning strikes cause all too well, while others may have never experienced its destructive potential. Lightning strikes can cause fire and destroy housing equipment such as controllers and motors. Proper earth grounding of house structures, electrical systems, and equipment is necessary to minimize the damage caused by lightning strikes.

According to the National Electric Code, a properly grounded system should have an earth ground resistance of 25 ohms (Ω) or less. Earth ground resistance need to be as low as possible to ensure that the electrical current from a lightning strike flows to the ground and not through generators, generator transfer switches, controllers, feed bin motors, etc.

A survey of nine Mississippi poultry farms (29 houses total) in early 2019 showed that 12 of the 29 houses had resistances at the control room breaker box higher than the recommended 25 Ω. The most consistent grounding locations were the control room breaker boxes, generator service entrances, and generator frames. Attention to electrical grounding systems have significantly improved over the last 20 years, but there are still substantial differences between farms, mostly as a result of house age, electrical system modifications/updates, and electrician preference and attention to detail.
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Electrical & Other Considerations to Reduce Fire Risk and Potential Losses ........................................... COVER
BankPlus Scholarship Winner ............................................................... 5
Mark Hickman Inducted into Mississippi Poultry Hall of Fame .......... 7
Clay Adkins is the 2019 MPA Allied Industry Leader of the Year ...... 7
Infectious Bronchitis: An Ever-Changing Virus of Poultry ............... 9
MPA’s 82nd Annual Convention Gets Great Reviews ....................... 10
Member Spotlight: Jones-Hamilton Co. ............................................ 13
MSU Professors Honored for Poultry Related Work ......................... 14
Elections Bring Major Changes to Legislature, State Leadership..... 15
Vigilance In Your Hiring Process ....................................................... 17
Poultry Science Students Receive Mississippi Poultry Endowment Scholarship at MSU ........................................ 17
Two MSU Graduate Students Split International Paper Scholarship ... 19
Poultry Disease Update From The State Veterinarian ....................... 21
State Permit Board Decides Multi-Media Site Inspection Date Determines Poultry Farm Siting Criteria Compliance .................. 23
In Memory of Joseph David Sumrall .................................................. 25
Breeder/Hatchery Seminar Stresses Cleanliness, Disease Prevention, Hen Management ......................................... 27
New Farmers.gov Feature Helps Producers Find Farm Loans that Fit Their Operation ........................................... 29
Why Poultry Growers Have Issues Dimming LED Lamps ............... 31
Recipe: Chicken Paella ........................................................................ 37
Upcoming Events .................................................................. BACK COVER

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One farm in the survey had Ufer grounds installed at the control room breaker boxes. A Ufer ground is achieved by bonding electrical service equipment to the steel rebar in the control room concrete pad or the concrete footer. Ufer grounds can help lower overall electrical resistance and strengthen the overall grounding integrity of the electrical system. In general, installing Ufer grounds in new construction is a good idea, but it has to be planned for at the time the concrete is poured. Installing a ground rod inside of the control room (through the concrete slab) is also a good idea to protect the rod and the connection from corrosion and equipment, but like a Ufer ground this also has to be planned in advance. Ground rods must be at least 5/8 – 3/4 inch in diameter and must be driven at least 8 feet vertically into the ground. Acorn type solid round clamps and 6- gauge wire are typically used to connect equipment to the ground rod.

A Ufer ground is achieved by bonding the steel rebar on the left side of the picture to the ground rod on the right side. The rebar in this picture is reinforcing the control room concrete pad. To create a Ufer ground in compliance with National Electric Code (NEC) standards, a minimum of 20 feet of 4 AWG or larger bare copper conductor or steel reinforcing bar or rod not less than 1/2 inch in diameter should be encased by at least 2 inches of concrete and located near the bottom of the concrete foundation.

Ground rods and wires can break due to equipment and negligence. Checking the connections of grounding systems regularly is good idea to ensure that houses are protected from lightning strikes. In existing houses, resistances can be lowered by bonding two ground rods together. MSU Extension can test ground resistances on poultry farms. If you are interested in learning more about your electrical grounding system, contact the author at john.linhoss@msstate.edu or (662) 325-1978.

Broken clamps like the one shown here can increase resistance due to a poor connection. The red arrow is pointing to the portion of the clamp that has split most likely as a result of overtightening. Problems such as this should be fixed immediately. Inspecting ground wires, clamps, and rods yearly is a good idea.

Have your electrical wiring and circuit breakers been inspected?

Poultry house environments are tough on electrical systems, including wiring. Over time, electrical connections can degrade, corrode, or become loose. Under optimal conditions, electrical current (amperes) flows through wires with little resistance, but if a connection is loose or a wire is undersized or corroded the flow can be impeded and heat can build up in the wire. Doubling the amount of current through a wire produces a fourfold increase in heat generation. Therefore, it’s important to ensure that wires are properly sized to decrease the potential of overheating. Excess heat in wires can lead to fires but it can also cause the insulation surrounding the copper wires to become brittle. Exposed electrical wire corrodes quickly in elevated ammonia environments and can increase the risk of shock and short-circuiting.

Commercial or industrial grade electrical wire (no Romex) should be run to all equipment inside of the house and through rigid conduit. It may be tempting for the electrician to run electrical wire through the attic space, but this should never be done. In addition, commercial or industrial grade outlets should be used inside of the house. They are fully sealed and designed for moist and dusty environments.

Wiring systems should be periodically inspected by a qualified and competent electrician. A temperature gun, infrared camera, volt meter, and flashlight are tools that can be used to inspect breakers, connections, and wires that may be operating outside of their maximum recommended temperature range. Paying close attention to electrical systems in older houses is especially recommended and can prevent major losses.
Winter is coming...what about your heaters?

Radiant heaters are not generally thought of as part of the electrical system, but cold weather is approaching and maintaining them is critical to ensure bird comfort and reduce fire risks. Unfortunately, they often receive little attention until there is a problem. A visual inspection of all heaters during brooding to make sure that all hoses are secure and fittings are tight can ensure your heaters perform efficiently and can reduce fire risks. Gas hoses or electrical wire should not be in contact with the canopy of the heater. Cleaning heaters several times a year with a backpack blower can remove built-up dust and debris and increase overall performance. The performance of a dirty round radiant brooder was shown to have a 30% reduction in performance when compared to a new heater. Preventative maintenance of radiant heaters can bolster poultry house safety and prevent future headaches.

When purchasing new heaters, look for UL or CSA rated heaters. Heaters with this designation usually have a sticker with UL or CSA on it, which indicates that they meet strict standards for safety, emissions, and other aspects of design and construction.

Are you periodically testing your generator?

Generators are a critical component of your electrical system. If it does not fire up when power is lost, then it’s really just an expensive piece of metal. The National Poultry Technology Center at Auburn University recommends that generators be tested once every flock with all the equipment needed for the flock operating. Testing a generator under full load ensures that it will be able to properly handle the electrical needs of the farm in a crisis situation. A generator can also be tested while houses are empty, but make sure that all fans and lights are on before transferring power. Performing a “kill test” on your farm helps identify and fix problems with your generator or your electrical system before the unexpected storm or lightning strike.

It is also currently recommended that generator sheds be built in a centralized location on the farm and not attached to any particular house. The reasoning behind this is that if a house is lost due to fire or windstorm and the generator shed is attached it, power is lost to the entire farm. Completely enclosing a generator in its own building is a good idea to protect it from the elements and critters. If the generator is in an enclosed building, it must be properly ventilated.

Take Home Message

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. This saying applies to poultry house design and construction too! Reducing risks of catastrophic losses from inadequate electrical systems is a benefit to growers, integrators, and insurance companies. Also, don’t forget to have a competent and qualified electrician perform an electrical inspection on your farm annually.
One single vaccine dose never did so much. VAXXITEK® HVT + IBD provides lifelong immunity¹ which leads to healthy birds, better performance and operational profits². Talk to your local representative for more information.

REFERENCES
1 Data on file.
2 Data on file.

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

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

John Milner serves as counsel to the Mississippi Poultry Association and has special expertise in poultry-related environmental issues. Partners Gene Wasson also has impressive abilities in the environmental sector. Associate Kyle Williams provides valuable assistance on business issues.

Mississippi State graduate student researching Salmonella persistence on poultry processing equipment after sanitation received the 2019 BankPlus Travel Grant to attend the Poultry Science Association convention in July to present research. Tomi Obe received $1,000 donated to the Mississippi Poultry Foundation by BankPlus. This is the fourth year that BankPlus has funded the travel grant through the Mississippi Poultry Foundation.

The BankPlus-Mississippi Poultry Foundation travel grant is given to a graduate or undergraduate student with a 3.25 Grade Point Average based on research activities. BankPlus is one of the state’s major lenders for poultry farms.

“BankPlus makes loans to poultry growers all over Mississippi and we are glad to help further this research that could make the industry more productive,” said BankPlus Senior Vice President & Commercial Lending Team Leader Kenny Williamson.

Tomilola (Tomi) Obe is a doctoral student working with Dr. Aaron Kiess. She earned a BS degree in Agricultural Economics in Nigeria and a second BS in Poultry Science at MSU; her MS degree in Poultry Science with concentration in food safety is from MSU under Dr. Sharma. Following her MS, she worked for a year as production supervisor for Peco Foods.

The objective of Tomi’s research, presented this summer at the PSA annual meeting, was to determine whether Salmonella persists on poultry processing equipment after sanitization, as this will allow prevention of cross-contamination of poultry meat. The findings of her research revealed that Salmonella persists on some pieces of processing equipment after sanitization, and it may be because that equipment is hard to reach and clean. It was also discovered that the Salmonella isolates recovered may also persist due to their tolerance to the antimicrobial agent used for sanitization or their ability to form strong biofilms. These findings emphasize the importance of proper cleaning procedures of processing equipment as some equipment may require more rigorous cleaning than others. Furthermore, it is crucial to apply antimicrobials at the appropriate concentration and routinely check the efficacy of the antimicrobial agent. The next logical step in Tomi’s research will be to examine the best sanitizer and cleaning procedures to use in controlling Salmonella, thus ensuring the safety of food for human consumption and preventing public health risks.
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MARK HICKMAN INDUCTED INTO MISSISSIPPI POULTRY HALL OF FAME

Mark Hickman, president and chief executive officer of Peco Foods, joins the Mississippi Poultry Hall of Fame in 2019, following the induction of his father, Denny, in 2004.

Mark, who has more than 35 years of corporate experience in the poultry business, has led the company founded by his grandfather and oversee its growth to the eighth largest poultry company in the nation.

Peco Foods, headquartered in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, with processing plants in Mississippi, Arkansas and Alabama, employs more than 7,000 at all facilities. Peco specializes in boneless breast products for the retail grocery and food service markets, guaranteeing fresh delivery in less than 72 hours anywhere in the continental United States. Their client list includes many of the best-known public and privately-held food companies around the world.

Hickman becomes the 35th member of the Mississippi Poultry Hall of Fame composed of those who founded companies or contributed to the growth of the industry into the state’s largest agricultural commodity. A committee that includes past winners of the award selects the nominee in July and the induction takes place at the MPA Convention in September.

Peco’s plants in Mississippi include processing plants in Bay Springs, Canton, and Sebastopol, further processing plants in Brooksville and Canton, hatcheries in Philadelphia and Sebastopol, feed mills in Bay Springs, Lake and Philadelphia and a cold-storage facility in West Point. Peco employs more than 3,600 in Mississippi.

Hickman was named Peco Foods Vice President in 1987 and was named to his current position in 2002. Mark is active in the industry on both the national and international levels. A past chairman of the National Chicken Council, he has served in leadership roles with numerous trade association boards including the World Poultry Foundation, the U.S. Poultry and Egg Association and others.

He holds three degrees from The University of Alabama: a B.A. in General Management, an M.A. in Finance and an MBA. Mark and his wife Ann, who is a UA alumna, have two sons, Mark Anthony and John Taylor, and three granddaughters.

CLAY ADKINS IS THE 2019 MPA ALLIED INDUSTRY LEADER OF THE YEAR

Over his career with International Paper, Clay’s main customer base has been in the poultry industry, and some of these accounts he has managed for over 25 years. He has worked in design, local sales, and as sales manager and national account manager.

For over thirty years, Clay has worked for the same company where his father worked for over forty years. International Paper is a sponsor of the golf tournament at the MPA Convention and Clay was instrumental in establishing a $5,000 scholarship through the Mississippi Poultry Foundation for graduate students in poultry science at MSU.

He graduated from Louisiana Tech University where he played football. He lives in Sarepta, Louisiana.

He has a son Logan and daughter in law Presley with one granddaughter and another one on the way.

The Allied Industry Leader of the Year is chosen by the MPA Executive Committee in July each year. Clay is the 52nd person selected for the honor first given in 1968.
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Infectious bronchitis is a highly contagious disease that involves the respiratory and urogenital tract of chickens and is caused by the infectious bronchitis virus (IBV). This virus is ubiquitous in most parts of the world where poultry are reared and is able to spread very rapidly in non-protected birds. It is shed via both the respiratory tract and the feces, and the virus can be acquired following inhalation or direct contact with infected birds, or by contact with contaminated litter, equipment or other contaminated materials. In young growing chickens, IBV causes respiratory disease that may predispose bacterial complications, and poor economic performance. Some strains of IBV replicate in the kidneys and cause renal-induced mortality. In layer and breeder chickens, egg production and quality declines may be observed, because the virus replicates in the oviduct causing permanent damage.

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

The most frequently detected serotype in Mississippi is Arkansas DPI. However, another subtype denominated Georgia 08 has also been present in our state since 2014.

First identified in Georgia in December 2007, the Georgia 08 IBV variant is present in other states in the south and southeast parts of our nation. This Georgia 08 variant primarily affects the lower respiratory tract, particularly the air sacs. Birds affected with Georgia 08 present mild mucoid or white-gray suds or with “cheesy” material in severe cases. Furthermore, the Georgia 08 strain can cause losses due to secondary infections from harmful bacteria such as E. coli. It seems that this virus is not highly virulent but can induce severe condemnations.

The inflammation of the air sacs is called airsacculitis and is frequently observed in birds infected with Georgia 08 IBV, and it is a major cause of condemnation at the processing plants. Moreover, airsacculitis increases the time for processing due to the additional measures needed to process affected birds, therefore, reduces line and plant efficiency. In response to the presence of this new serotype in our state, some companies have included in their vaccination programs this subtype.

Starting in April of this year, we have detected in our laboratory the presence of another subtype of IBV known as DMV/1639. This new subtype was isolated for the first time in the Delmarva area in 2011, and due to the clinical signs and lesions in susceptible birds it was determined that this subtype was mainly nephropathogenic, this means that this virus induced remarkable damage to the kidneys, producing severe inflammation of this organ (interstitial nephritis). An increase of outbreaks due to DMV/1639 was observed in 2013, and the dissemination of this virus has continued until today. This virus has been reported in several southern states including Mississippi. Interestingly, as opposed to the initial outbreaks characterized for kidney damage, these new problems have been characterized by respiratory problems in broilers. Similarly, to Georgia 08, the subtype DVM/1639 compromises the function of the mucociliar system, that provides protection at the upper respiratory tract against bacterial infections. With the mucociliar system down, bacterial complications will take place with an increase of airsacculitis problems that could constitute an important problem at the processing plants.

A critical aspect to establishing a vaccination program is to determine the types of IBVs that are circulating in our farms or companies. The vaccine selected should be closely related to the viruses present in the field. Therefore, a continuous monitoring by viral isolation and genotyping is recommended to determine the IBVs prevalent in the area. In case there is no vaccine strain that is closely related to the viruses in in the field, the use of combinations is recommended to broaden the protection. In several cases vaccine combinations work well enough in the field to achieve good control. Unfortunately, it seems that subtype DMV/1639 is not responsive to any of the combinations of commercially available vaccines that have been tested.

The use of vaccines including new IBV serotypes should be monitored closely and carefully, and the introduction of new serotypes should not be considered as a permanent or long-term solution. It is very important to keep monitoring the changes in the field IBV isolates and the vaccination programs should be re-adapted according to the situation of IBV on the farms. Furthermore, the strict enforcement of biosecurity measures is needed to control and decrease the possible dissemination of these viruses.
MPA’s 82nd Annual Convention was a record setting year from beginning to end. The value of sponsorships set a new record and the concluding Scholarship Auction on Saturday, September 14, topped all previous auctions.

The Convention began with Thursday night’s Kick off Reception on the Barefoot’s Deck at the beautiful Hilton Sandestin Beach, Golf Resort. It was a beautiful evening and it set the stage for the entire meeting.

We had great registration numbers this year and the convention was well attended with over 450 people registered. We had 122 sponsors: 22 Platinum, 31 Diamond, 32 Gold, 32 Silver and five sponsors.

This year’s convention speakers were the Honorable John Read, Chairman of the Mississippi House Appropriations Committee, Jim Sumner, president of the USA Poultry & Egg Export Council, and Jim Owens, principal with Performance Strategies Group.

Rep. Read reported on the improving state government revenues and talked about the 2019 elections. Sumner took the audience on a world tour of poultry markets and the hurdles to increasing sales of U.S. poultry in each. Owens spoke about Baby Boomers and Millennials in the workplace and successful approaches to intergenerational leadership.

Representatives of Miss. State University divisions and state and federal agencies updated the crowd on their work benefitting the poultry industry. These reports always receive high marks in the post-convention surveys participants fill out.

Friday morning, more than 75 ladies came together for Cobb-Vantress/Huvepharma Luncheon. Nancy Billingsley was the Chair of the ladies program this year and invited best-selling Southern author Ronda Rich to speak to us. We have had some great times during this luncheon, but I think this year was one of the best. Ronda has spoken at the MPA Convention in the past and is always a favorite. There was lots of good food and as always, many, many gifts.

Almost 50 golfers went to the Raven Golf Club to play in the International Paper/Brennan’s Vendworks/McNeely Plastics tournament. Winners of the tournament were: 1st place a Flt: Alex Smith, Patrick Pierce, Bart Smith and Dink Upchurch. The Longest Drive was won by John Putnum and the Closest to the Hole was #4 Jeff Cormier, #6 Bob Rosa, #8 Patrick McRae & Jay McMillan, #12 Pic Billingsley, #16 John Putnum/ Bob Rosa.

The fishermen boarded nine boats for the American Packaging/Deep South Equipment Fishing Tournament. QC Supply donated the coolers. Jesse Middleton caught the biggest fish which was a shark.

Saturday morning, we recognized the scholarships given by International Paper, First Financial Bank, Bank Plus, Southern AG Credit, and the Mississippi Poultry Foundation. A new scholarship was announced by First South Farm Credit.

As always MPA is proud to introduce the seniors from the Poultry Science Department at Mississippi State University.
University to representatives of the industry at the Convention. The students this year were: Abigail Algee, Malik Davis, John Graves, Zachary Hodge, Neil Smith, Alexis Turnipseed, Ember West, Victoria Williams, and Josie Gamble. We are happy they could join us for our meeting.

On Saturday night, the Platinum and Diamond Reception was the kickoff for the Silent and Live Auction to benefit our MS Poultry Foundation. Handbid was once again a valuable tool for the silent auction. All of the silent auction items were listed with pictures and participants made their bids with their mobile phones through Handbid. There were several off-site bidders, too.

Auctioneer Henry Redmond did an outstanding job with the live auction. The live and silent auctions netted the foundation a combined $47,000, an increase of $15,000 over last year. This money will go a long way towards scholarships for our growers children and grandchildren and our poultry science majors.

If you missed this year, we hope to see you next year September 17-19, 2020 for fun, networking and information about Mississippi’s largest agricultural industry.
It may take a large investment to protect your small one.

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While Jones-Hamilton Co. has been a leader in producing, packaging and distributing chemicals and compounds since 1951, it was during the early 1990s that the company’s agricultural division (JH Ag) made waves in the poultry industry with the introduction of PLT® - Poultry Litter Treatment. Introduced as producers first started growing birds on built-up litter, PLT® quickly became the industry-leading solution for controlling ammonia and creating a favorable environment for bird growth and performance.

“I first started using PLT® the year it came out when I was working in live production,” said Clint Lauderdale, now the Southern Regional Manager at Jones-Hamilton Co. “We kept a variety of litter treatment products in the medication room. We didn’t have a cost share program at that point, so growers would just pick up what they wanted from us at cost. Over time, we found that PLT® was being ordered repeatedly while the other products sat there. From then on, I just ordered PLT®.”

25 Years of PLT®

Today, Jones-Hamilton Co. is celebrating the 25th anniversary of PLT® and its proven track record of being a safe, effective and environmentally friendly litter amendment. “PLT® has stood the test of time over a lot of products,” said Lauderdale. “We learned that if you applied it correctly, PLT® works 100% of the time. That’s still true today.”

Defining Litter Management

Over the years, Jones-Hamilton representatives defined litter management best practices and have become a trusted source for environmental management. “Litter was one of the last components to be analyzed and managed, so it’s not uncommon to see pre-built-up litter practices being followed,” said Blake Gibson, Global Sales Manager at Jones-Hamilton Co. “We often see improper decaking and producers that still till or pulverize litter, which only increases surface area and raises ammonia levels. It’s why litter management education continues to be pivotal.”

The company maintains an active education presence in the industry through site visits, presentations and online education. They are kicking off 25 years of PLT® with a sweepstakes with a top prize of $500 to collect stories of how litter management has changed. Learn more at JonesHamiltonAg.com/litter-stories.
Mississippi State University professors in Poultry Science and Agricultural and Biological Engineering have been racking up national honors this summer.

Professor David Peebles received the Poultry Science Association’s highest recognition, being named a fellow of the PSA during its annual meeting July 15-18 in Montreal, Québec, Canada.

The elected honor is reserved for individuals who have achieved professional distinction and made significant contributions to the field.

A scientist with the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station, Peebles’ research focuses on nutrients and vaccine in ovo, or in egg, injection, and hatching egg incubation, eggshell quality and embryogenesis. He has trained 26 master’s and nine doctoral students and has served on 53 graduate committees. Currently, he is the major professor for one master’s and two doctoral students. Peebles has had 513 career publications and was the most published author in Poultry Science and the Journal of Applied Poultry Research combined from 2014-2016.

Mississippi State University Extension Professor Jessica Wells received the 2019 Poultry Science Association recruitment award in July at the organization’s annual meeting in Montréal.

The undergraduate coordinator and recruiter for the Department of Poultry Science in MSU’s College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Wells completed her doctoral degree in agricultural science/poultry science at MSU this spring. She earlier earned her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in poultry science from MSU in 2007 and 2009, respectively.

Given every other year and selected by the PSA Careers Committee, the honor is presented to an individual who significantly improves the recruiting program of a respective department, college or university through innovative means.

In the last year, undergraduate enrollment in the department increased 11% with a 125% total increase over the entire 10-year period. Wells participates in various recruitment activities on a regional and national scale, leading a poultry hatch-out project that has reached more than 2,400 school children in nearly 120 classrooms across the state.

Yang Zhao is this year’s recipient of the Sunkist Young Designer Award from the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers. Sponsored by Sunkist Growers, Inc., the award recognizes and honors the organization’s members under 40 years of age for outstanding contributions to the advancement of the profession and professional achievements.

Zhao, a Mississippi State assistant professor of agricultural and biological engineering, is receiving the honor for his work in design of engineering systems and tools for poultry welfare assessment, flock management and environmental control.

Most recently, Zhao has worked on a robotic floor egg collection system for cage-free layer systems. This project included understanding poultry behavior and interaction with the robot. Currently, about 20 percent of eggs are produced in a cage-free production environment. To meet demand, approximately 70 percent of the nation’s 320 million birds would need to be cage-free by 2025.

Zhao earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from China Agricultural University. He earned his doctoral degree in animal sciences and farm technology from Wageningen University in the Netherlands.
As we told you earlier, the partisan makeup of the Legislature is not expected to change much, but the Legislature will have at least 36 new members in addition to at least five new members among the eight statewide elected officials.

As it stands today after retirements and primary election defeats, there will be 22 new members in the 122 member House and 14 of the 52 Senators will be new. There could be more if any incumbents are defeated in the general election.

That is currently a 27 percent turnover in the Senate and an 18 percent turnover in the House. Combined that is a 21 percent turnover in the 174 members.

This will mean changes in leadership in both chambers. House Speaker Pro Tempore Greg Snowden, R-Meridian was defeated as was Ways and Means Committee Chairman Jeff Smith, R-Columbus. The Pro Tempore, the number two position in the House, is elected by the membership. Other committee chairmen defeated include: Gary Staples, Energy, Patty Willis, Drug Policy, and Deborah Dixon, Youth and Family Affairs.

A total of 11 significant House committee chairmanships are open due to retirements and election defeats. Philip Gunn, the Speaker of the House, who appoints chairmen, is expected to be re-elected.

In the Senate there will be a new lieutenant governor – either Republican Delbert Hosemann or Democrat Jay Hughes. The Lieutenant Governor appoints the committee chairman, so all chairmanships are open. There will also be a new Senate President Pro Tempore to be elected by the Senate.

There are 50 legislative general election contests. Thirty-eight of those pit a Republican against a Democrat and the others involved a third-party or independent candidate only against either a Republican or Democrat. A list of all the legislative, district and statewide races is on the MPA website.

In the district races, two of three seats are being contested on both the Transportation Commission and the Public Service Commission. On the Transportation Commission, Republican John Caldwell faces Democrat Joey Grist and in the Central District Democrat Willie Simmons faces Republican Butch Lee. On the Public Service Commission, Republican Brent Bailey faces Democrat DeKeither Stamps in the Central District while in the Southern District, Republican Dane Maxwell faces Democrat Connie Moran.

The turnover in those holding statewide offices will be the largest since 1979. Mississippi will have a new governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, attorney general, and treasurer. This could be the first time since Reconstruction ended that all statewide elected officials are Republicans.

In the governor’s race, for the first time since Reconstruction, more people voted in the Republican primary than in the Democratic primary. More than 92,000 people voted in the Republican primary than voted in the Democratic primary. Looking back at the last four elections, Democrats have seen a drop-off of 60,000 to 130,000 votes from the primary to the general election while Republicans have seen a gain of 200,000 to 276,000 from August to November.

This gubernatorial election pits two statewide elected officials against each other: Republican Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves and Democratic Attorney General Jim Hood, both have held statewide offices for 16 years. Eight Lt. Governors have been elected governor and two attorneys general have moved from that office into the Governor’s Mansion. A sitting lieutenant governor has never faced a sitting attorney general in a race for governor.

The governor over his four year term appoints 400 members to boards and commissions, including the Workers Compensation Commissioners, names judges and U.S. Senators to vacant seats, and appoints the directors of the following major departments:

- Banking and Consumer Finance
- Child Protective Services
- Miss. Development Authority
- Emergency Management Agency
- Employment Security
- Environmental Quality
- Human Services
- Finance and Administration
- Human Services
- Marine Resources
- Division of Medicaid
- State Public Defender
- Public Safety
- Rehabilitation Services
- Revenue
- State Aid Road Construction

Don’t forget to vote November 5.
Litter Management

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Are the employees working on your farm there to help care for your animals? Do their goals align with your business? Unfortunately, it’s a common strategy for some animal rights activist organizations to have individuals go “undercover” on farms to record videos that can be taken out of context, stage scenes of animal mistreatment or encourage abuse to record it without doing anything to stop it.

The Animal Ag Alliance, a non-profit dedicated to bridging the communication gap between farm and fork for more than thirty years, monitors animal rights activists and offers these tips regarding hiring:

• It is vital to thoroughly screen applicants, verify information and check all references.

• Be cautious of individuals who try to use a college ID, have out of state license plates or are looking for short-term work.

• During the interview, look for answers that seem overly rehearsed or include incorrect use of farm terminology.

• Search for all applicants online to see if they have public social media profiles or websites/blogs. Look for any questionable content or connections to activist organizations.

• Require all employees to sign your animal care policy. Provide training and updates on proper animal handling training.

• Require employees to report any mishandling to management immediately.

• Watch out for red flags, such as coming to work unusually early or staying late and going into areas of the farm not required for their job.

Always trust your gut – if something doesn’t seem right, explore it further. Be vigilant and never cut corners on your hiring process, even if you need to hire someone quickly. Doing your homework on every job applicant may be time-consuming, but it can ultimately save your business’ reputation. As always, it is important to work with local legal counsel to ensure compliance with federal and state laws for your hiring process.

You can find farm security resources and background information on animal rights activist organizations at www.AnimalAgAlliance.org or reach out to the Alliance at Info@AnimalAgAlliance.org or 703-562-5160. As members of the Animal Ag Alliance, we have access to more detailed resources on hiring and farm security. If you have suspicious applicants on your farm, contact us to verify if the individuals have connections to animal rights activism.

POULTRY SCIENCE STUDENTS RECEIVE MISS. POULTRY ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIP AT MSU

Reed Wade, Grower Relations Coordinator - Mississippi Poultry Association

In 2016, the Mississippi Poultry Foundation Board of Trustees created an endowment at Mississippi State University with a $25,000 donation. In 2018, the Trustees added another $10,000 and at their August 2019, the Trustees approved another $15,000 bringing the total to $50,000. The 4 percent earned on the endowment is awarded annually to students chosen by the Mississippi State Poultry Science Department.

The recipients of the 2019 Mississippi Poultry Foundation Endowment Scholarship are Morgan Attwood, a sophomore from North Carolina and Nathaniel Miller, a junior from South Carolina. They will each receive $500.

The first scholarship of $750 was awarded in 2018 to Grant Wallace, an incoming freshman from Hartselle, Alabama.

The deadline for the scholarships is April 15 each year and scholarship recipients will be chosen and then notified by the MSU Poultry Science Department in August.

VIGILANCE IN YOUR HIRING PROCESS

Allyson Jones-Brimmer, Director of Industry Relations, Animal Agriculture Alliance

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The deadline for the scholarships is April 15 each year and scholarship recipients will be chosen and then notified by the MSU Poultry Science Department in August.
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TWO MSU GRADUATE STUDENTS SPLIT INTERNATIONAL PAPER SCHOLARSHIP

Reed Wade, Grower Relations Coordinator - Mississippi Poultry Association

Two Mississippi State University graduate students working with poultry professors on research to benefit the poultry industry received the 2019 International Paper Scholarship. Tianmin Li and Tomi Obe will split $5,000 donated to the Mississippi Poultry Foundation by International Paper.

This is the sixth year that International Paper has funded the scholarship through the Mississippi Poultry Foundation and the third year that the award has been based on research priorities of the Mississippi Board of Directors.

“International Paper is pleased to partner with our poultry company customers to reward promising young researchers searching for solutions to obstacles to the growth and prosperity of the industry. We believe the IP scholarship supporting these bright students at Mississippi State University will benefit the poultry industry,” said Clay D. Adkins, IP National Account Manager-Protein.

Recipients must be a full-time graduate student enrolled in Poultry Science or related field at Mississippi State University, have demonstrated leadership abilities, a Grade Point Average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.

Tianmin Li is a Poultry Science Master’s student at Mississippi State University working with Dr. Li Zhang. She received her undergraduate degree in Food Science in China. Her research interest is the application of molecular techniques in poultry microbiology.

Avian pathogenic Escherichia coli (APEC) is the leading cause of colibacillosis, which results in serious economic losses in the poultry industry. Tianmin investigated the efficacy of in ovo injection of three different Lactobacillus strains to prevent APEC infection in broilers and evaluated the prevalence of virulence and antimicrobial resistance genes of APEC isolates.

The results showed that in ovo injection of a single probiotic bacterial strain did not confer protection against extraintestinal infections of APEC in broilers. A high prevalence of genes encoding resistance to trimethoprim, quaternary ammonium compounds, tetracycline, gentamicin and arsenic were detected in these APEC isolates. Some APEC strains were of high zoonotic risk because the virulence genes they carried could cause human intestinal disease.

The next step in this research will be to investigate the efficacy of administration of multi-probiotics in prevent APEC infection. The result are of interest to the industry because in ovo injection of probiotics has the potential to be a novel method to prevent pathogen infection with improved benefits for broiler industry.

Tomilola (Tomi) Obe is a doctoral student working with Dr. Aaron Kiess. She earned a BS degree in Agricultural Economics in Nigeria and a second BS in Poultry Science at MSU; her MS degree in Poultry Science with concentration in food safety is from MSU under Dr. Sharma. Following her MS, she worked for a year as production supervisor for Peco Foods.

The objective of Tomi’s research, presented this summer at the PSA annual meeting, was to determine whether Salmonella persists on poultry processing equipment after sanitization, as this will allow prevention of cross-contamination of poultry meat. The findings of her research revealed that Salmonella persists on some pieces of processing equipment after sanitization, and it may be because that equipment is hard to reach and clean. It was also discovered that the Salmonella isolates recovered may also persist due to their tolerance to the antimicrobial agent used for sanitization or their ability to form strong biofilms. These findings emphasize the importance of proper cleaning procedures of processing equipment as some equipment may require more rigorous cleaning than others. Furthermore, it is crucial to apply antimicrobials at the appropriate concentration and routinely check the efficacy of the antimicrobial agent. The next logical step in Tomi’s research will be to examine the best sanitizer and cleaning procedures to use in controlling Salmonella, thus ensuring the safety of food for human consumption and preventing public health risks.

The MPA Board of Directors reviewed abstracts of the research projects and selected two that were judged to have the most promise for solving industry problems.
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On July 22nd the State Veterinarian’s Office was notified of a positive Infectious Laryngotracheitis (ILT) flock in the Carthage area. While the source of the infection was never identified, fortunately the infection was limited to the one farm and there was no further spread to the outbreak. It is important to remember that many backyard flocks have diseases such as ILT and Mycoplasma. With the large number of backyard poultry flocks that are in our state, diseases such as these are likely to be encountered. As you go about your daily activities, whether going to church, the feed store or the bank, you never know when you will encounter individuals that have backyard poultry and may be experiencing disease and it is important to know that the most common way that these diseases come to your farm is on clothing or vehicles. Practicing good biosecurity is the only way to keep these diseases off your farm and protect your livelihood. Simply put, biosecurity is the practices we use to keep disease off the farm, fortunately it doesn’t have to be complicated, but it must become a part of your way of life. None of the practices work if we don’t use them all the time. It only takes one time of skipping a particular practice, and disease could be introduced onto your farm. Below are some concepts, that while they came from an article by Wesley Lyons in the National Hog Farmer.

**Downtime is your friend:** It is important to not go directly from a neighbors’ farm to yours without downtime or implementing some practice to prevent the potential spread of disease. Especially dangerous is going from an older or sick flock to a younger or healthy flock. If you can’t wait overnight to go to your farm after visiting another one, is imperative that you use disposable boots, change clothes and use tire sprays.

**Danish entries are necessary:** This may be a new concept for some of you, but a true Danish entry includes a bench for changing shoes (and keeping street shoes off common walkways inside the farm), clothing change and washing of the hands (and in some instances also the face). The key is limiting the cross-contamination of anything between populations of poultry. This utilizes the concept that even walking between houses on your own farm requires some sort of biosecurity beyond just a footbath when going into a house. Diseases such as Avian Influenza may be spread by droppings around feed bins etc. and taken into the poultry house.

**On that note, wash your truck:** Inside and out, as often as you can!

**You can’t disinfect manure, but disinfectants work:** Clean is a relative term, but for biosecurity purposes, cleanliness is next to godliness. Footbaths should be monitored and changed regularly. Dirty equipment, shoes, etc. can’t be disinfected without first being cleaned.

**Establish clean/dirty lines (CDL):** The clean/dirty line should be established for every threshold on a site starting with the gate. When possible visitors should park at the gate or as far away from the poultry houses and intake fans as possible. As mentioned above, the concept behind the Danish Entry System, is that the entrance into each poultry house should be a clean/dirty line.

In the end, biosecurity is a mindset. It must be integral, and it must be done with integrity. It must be easy enough to follow that breaking the rules seems ludicrous. In the end, protecting your flock from devastating disease and increased downtimes to clean and disinfect your farm will be worth it.

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**POULTRY DISEASE UPDATE FROM THE STATE VETERINARIAN**

*Dr. Jim Watson, State Veterinarian*

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On September 10, 2019 the Mississippi Environmental Quality Permit Board (Permit Board) issued an important decision concerning poultry grower permits. The basic question before the Permit Board was whether the site for an eight-house poultry farm of a grower, Le Poultry, in Pike County, Mississippi (near Osyka, MS) complied with the regulatory “buffer zone” siting criteria that must exist between poultry facilities and adjacent occupied dwellings. Resolving that issue required first determining the date on which buffer zone compliance must be established. The Petitioners opposing issuance of the Le Poultry permit coverages (who are property owners in the vicinity of the proposed farm) transported to and placed a mobile home within the buffer zone after the general permit coverages were applied for in December, 2017, and a site inspection was made by MDEQ staff on January 22, 2018, but before the coverages were issued by the Permit Board on May 8, 2018.

The Permit Board regulations establish “siting criteria” that create the buffer zone. Rule 1.1.1.C.2. requires that poultry facilities of the type proposed by Le Poultry:

- must be at least 600 feet from the nearest non-owned (by the applicant) occupied dwelling or commercial establishment and at least 150 feet from the nearest adjoining property line.

MDEQ is required by regulation governing the application for coverage under the Dry Litter Poultry General Permit (“Poultry General Permit”) to conduct a site inspection before either (1) granting coverage through an MDEQ staff determination or (2) presenting the permit coverage application to the Permit Board for decision. The same regulation, Rule 1.1.4.C.5, states that the site inspection determines compliance with the siting criteria:

The Department shall perform a site inspection prior to presenting the application for consideration to the Permit Board or granting coverage under a general permit. The inspection will determine compliance with siting criteria set forth in Rule 1.1.1.C.2.

This Rule 1.1.4.C.5 commands MDEQ to conduct a single site inspection before acting on a permit application (“a site inspection” and “the inspection” are the words used). As quoted and highlighted above, the Rule further states the regulatory significance of this inspection: it “will determine compliance with siting criteria set forth in Rule 1.1.1.C.2.”

MDEQ says that Rule 1.1.4.C.5 establishes the date of the site inspection as the determination date for siting criteria compliance set forth in Rule 1.1.1.C.2. That is, MDEQ construed the regulation to mean that if no dwelling house is within the regulatory buffer zone on the date of the site inspection, then site compliance is established and later placement of an occupied dwelling house within the buffer zone is irrelevant.

Petitioners argued that the date to determine regulatory compliance is the date the Board meets and votes whether to issue the Permits, and consequently placement of an occupied dwelling house within the buffer zone at any time before the Board votes would require denying the permit coverages.

The MDEQ regional office staff visited the Le Poultry site on January 22, 2018. The written report resulting from this January 22, 2018, site inspection is a seven-page, comprehensive form for the use of the regional office staff inspector. It requires documentation of numerous data points, including - as relates to the buffer zone here - detailed measurements of distances to the nearest property line and nearest occupied dwelling and how the distances were calculated. The form itself is titled “Multimedia Site Inspection/Investigation Form,” carries a revision date of 2/8/2008, and gives procedures for completing the inspection (e.g., “The Regional Office Inspector physically visits the site and evaluates the facility and the distances that apply to the buffer zones”). This is the only inspection referred to in MDEQ’s Permit Action Form.

There was no occupied dwelling within the buffer zone on January 22, 2018. By March 28, 2018, the Petitioners had moved their mobile home within the buffer zone and claimed that they had occupied it by the next day.

The Permit Board concluded as a matter of law that the site inspection conducted on January 22, 2018, by MDEQ regional office staff, and reported on Multimedia Site Inspection/Investigation Form, was the site inspection required by Rule 1.1.4.C.5 that determines compliance with the siting and buffer zone requirements of Rule 1.1.1.C.2. Therefore the determination date for compliance with the siting criteria’s buffer zone was January 22, 2018. Since there was no occupied dwelling within the buffer zone on January 22, 2018, the Permit Board therefore concluded as a matter of law that Le Poultry met the regulatory siting criteria as of the applicable determination date pursuant to the regulations, January 22, 2018.
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In their written “findings of fact and conclusions of law”, the Permit Board emphasized the importance of their September 10, 2019 decision for poultry permitting going forward:

This case is an example of why the regulation establishes a specific and early inspection as the determinative date for siting compliance. Even with intervening major holidays, MDEQ timely determined the Permit applications completed, which triggered the request for the site inspection, which was then conducted on January 22, 2018, less than one month after the Poultry Permit application was filed. Otherwise, determining siting compliance would be a moving target, and, as Le Poultry points out, “[t]he site inspection required by the regulations would be rendered meaningless if a neighboring landowner could establish an ‘occupied dwelling’ at any point up until the date the Permit Board meets.” Both MDEQ and Le Poultry suggest that a moving determination date for buffer zone compliance would create “chaos”. The arbitrary and capricious nature of the results that might occur otherwise are shown here, too: this matter was not presented to the Board in February or March only because of the unavailability of a key

staffer—Tracy Tomkins, Chief of EPD’s Water I Branch. Had the matter been presented at either of those meetings, the record is clear that no dwelling was then in place.

The potentially disastrous results for Le Poultry - or any other poultry farmer - of a moving-target date to determine site compliance take no imagination to realize. Mr. Le engaged a real estate agent to help locate a suitable property for a poultry farm; he knew about the buffer zone requirements, and so, “Before I purchased the Osyka Property, I verified that there were no dwellings within 600 or 1,000 feet of the location where I planned to construct . . . . I invested in the purchase of this property in reliance on this fact.” Le Poultry then moved promptly to seek the Permits, when no dwelling was present.

On September 19, 2019, the Petitioners appealed the Permit Board’s decision to the Pike County Chancery Court. No date has been set for any proceedings in that court at the present time. If you have any questions relating to the Le Poultry decision, please contact John Milner, MPA Counsel, at jmilner@brunini.com.

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**Joseph David Sumrall**

Born in Miles City, Montana on November 28, 1982, J.D. as everyone knew him, passed away on August 19, 2019 at Forrest General Hospital in Hattiesburg, Mississippi at the age of 36.

JD, a very proud graduate of Mississippi State University (Poultry Science), was Grower Relations Coordinator for MPA from January 2007 to December 2010. He also worked at MPA members InsulPro Plus, Gilco and Q.C. Supply.

He was an active member of Oakland Grove Baptist Church in Laurel, Mississippi where he served the Lord and his community as a deacon.

He was preceded in death by Laney Land Sumrall, his first wife and mother to their son Landon, his father-in-law Tom Land and his father James David Sumrall.

JD leaves behind his loving wife, Rachel Harvey Sumrall; his dear mother, Julie Brush Sumrall Bounds; and brother, Andrew Sumrall (Shannon), all of Heidelberg; mother-in-law Melanie Land of Madison; father and mother-in-law, Wayne and Cathy Harvey of Forest; brothers-in-law Clay Land, Van Land (Shelby), John Harvey (Tracy), Elijah Harvey, Justus Harvey; sisters-in-law Sarah King (David), Mary Martin (Russell), Leah Bergin (John); and a host of aunts, uncles, cousins and many friends.
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Eighty-five breeder and hatchery professionals learned ways to make their operations more successful in producing baby chicks with fewer or no antibiotics at the Mississippi Poultry Association’s seventh annual Breeder Hatchery Seminar. The classes gathered at the MSU Lab in Pearl and at the Collins Civic Center in August.

Live vaccines have to replicate, killed vaccines do not replicate and must be injected into each bird and usually require two doses. There are also, gene-deleted, recombinant and chemically mutated vaccines, explained Dr. Kelli Jones with Ceva in her presentation on “Good Live and Killed Vaccine Program.” Vaccines need to be administered via the route of infection of the disease the vaccine is intended to combat such as the respiratory tract or the intestinal tract. Only healthy flocks should be vaccinated and since vaccines are sensitive to temperature fluctuations, those administering vaccines should maintain proper cold-chain protocols.

MSU Poultry Science professor Dr. Aaron Kiess’ presented his research on “In Ovo Injection of Probiotics at the Hatchery” that has found that in ovo injection of probiotics that the bacteria does make it into the gut of the embryo, and in the majority of cases does not impact hatchability and research has shown some of the bacteria improved performance.

Dr. Lloyd Keck with Zoetis gave a “Reo Virus Update.” He explained the symptoms that indicate Reo Virus and said there are nine variants of the virus and 80 percent of reo virus is not pathogenic but the virus can be transmitted vertically from parent to child and horizontally from chicken to chicken.

Daren Rakestraw with Aviagen in his presentation on “Managing Hen Weights/ Fleshting as the Flock Ages,” said egg weights and body weights are important indicators and both males and females need to be monitored for weights because failure to maintain body weight can have lifelong negative effects. Growers and breeder managers need to manage for uniformity.

Body weight and feeding are the most effective ways to manage breeder performance, according to Jeff Steed with Cobb-Vantress, Inc., who focused on “Feeding Breeders for Production” He recommended that growers walk through the birds during feeding for the first four to five weeks to train them to the feeders and it would pay dividends later to give them this attention during rearing and prior to laying.

As companies move to reduce or eliminate the use of antibiotics in poultry production, the water quality the chickens drink becomes more important, according to Mary Katherine Foy with Proxy-Clean who stressed the “Importance of Flock Water Quality to NAE/ABF Production.” She said, “if it is in the barn, it will get into the drinking system.” She said bacteria in water can grow dramatically in less than two weeks after cleaning and vaccines can stay in the water pipes long after they are administered. While it is more difficult to clean out the water system in breeder houses, she said, “treating water once a month is not a water program.”

Dirty fertile eggs reduce hatch and facts allow in bacteria, Dr. Keith Bramwell with Jamesway stressed. In his talk on “Hatchery Sanitation in an Antibiotic-Free Environment,” Bramwell recommended that hatcheries look at all of their facilities for sources of bacteria including breakrooms, restrooms, and what vendors come into the hatchery.

Chad Daniels with ChickMaster in his presentation on “How Egg Handling Affects Hatchability” urged hatcheries to look at all the ways and times eggs are handled from the farm and through the hatchery and to use data-loggers that look like eggs but record data on temperature, humidity and shock. He said one focus should be on the trucks because bad roads can cause a lot of cracks.

Scott Ballinger with Cobb-Vantress, Inc. explained the link between humidity and weight loss in the eggs in his presentation on the “Best Wet Bulb for Egg Incubation.” He explained that wet bulb controls the amount of humidity in the setter cabinet and helps dictate the amount of moisture loss. He reviewed Cobb's chick quality assessment chart, what chicks tell us after hatch, what indicators we can use to identify issues, and how to recognize top quality chicks.

Wrapping up each day's presentations were ones by State Veterinarian Dr. Jim Watson and Dr. Tom Tabler, the MSU Poultry Science professor who lined up the speakers with help from MPA members. Dr. Watson spoke about recent disease detections in a couple of flocks and work ongoing with surrounding states to regulate the flow of birds and eggs across state lines during an outbreak. Dr. Tabler presented slides showing the progress on the new Poultry Science Department building under construction near the Vet School.

MPA appreciates the companies who provided speakers and who also covered the costs of meals and meeting space in Collins and Dr. Danny Magee, Director of Poultry Research and Diagnostic Laboratory who moderated and made the lab available for the meeting.
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A new online tool can help farmers and ranchers find information on U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) farm loans that may best fit their operations. USDA has launched the new **Farm Loan Discovery Tool** as the newest feature on farmers.gov, the Department’s self-service website for farmers.

“Access to credit is critical in the agriculture industry, especially for new farmers,” said Bill Northey, Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation. “This new interactive tool can help farmers find information on USDA farm loans within minutes. We are working to improve our customer service, and part of our solution is through improving how farmers can work with us online.”

USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers a variety of loan options to help farmers finance their operations. From buying land to financing the purchase of equipment, FSA loans can help. Compared to this time last year, FSA has seen an 18 percent increase in the amount it has obligated for direct farm ownership loans, and through the 2018 Farm Bill, has increased the limits for several loan products.

USDA conducted field research in eight states, gathering input from farmers and FSA farm loan staff to better understand their needs and challenges.

“We received suggestions from both farmers and our staff on how to improve the farm loan process, and we wanted to harness this opportunity to be more efficient and effective,” Northey said. “This feature is one step in our efforts.”

**How the Tool Works**

Farmers who are looking for financing options to operate a farm or buy land can answer a few simple questions about what they are looking to fund and how much money they need to borrow. After submitting their answers, farmers will be provided information on farm loans that best fit their specific needs. The loan application and additional resources also will be provided.

Farmers can download application quick guides that outline what to expect from preparing an application to receiving a loan decision. There are four guides that cover loans to individuals, entities, and youth, as well as information on microloans. The guides include general eligibility requirements and a list of required forms and documentation for each type of loan. These guides can help farmers prepare before their first USDA service center visit with a loan officer.

Farmers can access the **Farm Loan Discovery Tool** by visiting farmers.gov/fund and clicking the “Start” button. Follow the prompts and answer five simple questions to receive loan information that is applicable to your agricultural operation. The tool is built to run on any modern browser like Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or the Safari browser, and is fully functional on mobile devices. It does not work in Internet Explorer.

**About Farmers.gov**

In 2018, USDA unveiled farmers.gov, a dynamic, mobile-friendly public website combined with an authenticated portal where farmers will be able to apply for programs, process transactions, and manage accounts.

The **Farm Loan Discovery Tool** is one of many resources on farmers.gov to help connect farmers to information that can help their operations. Earlier this year, USDA launched the **My Financial Information** feature, which enables farmers to view their loan information, history, payments, and alerts by logging into the website.

USDA is building farmers.gov for farmers, by farmers. In addition to the interactive farm loan features, the site also offers a **Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool**. Farmers can visit farmers.gov/recover/disaster-assistance-tool#step-1 to find disaster assistance programs that can help their operation recover from natural disasters.

With feedback from customers and field employees who serve those customers, farmers.gov delivers farmer-focused features through an agile, iterative process to deliver the greatest immediate value to America’s agricultural producers – helping farmers and ranchers do right, and feed everyone.

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Lighting programs are a common practice in today’s poultry industry to improve bird performance and meet welfare criteria. Lighting is an important concern in most poultry facilities because it represents a large part of monthly energy consumption and expenses. Traditionally, incandescent or fluorescent lamps (or perhaps high pressure sodium lamps in broiler breeder houses) were used to provide required light levels in poultry houses. However, in recent years, light emitting diode (LED) technology has become quite popular because of the associated energy efficiency properties and the energy savings they offer growers. Energy savings of LEDs are quite remarkable (they are roughly 80-85 percent more energy efficient than incandescent lamps). However, there have been some issues along the way. Fortunately, by working with growers in the field and manufacturers in the laboratory, we now better understand many of the technical and operational problems with LEDs if not properly installed and properly matched with other control equipment, particularly when it comes to light dimming.

### Lighting terms

Before we get into the dimming issues, there are a few terms with which we need to be familiar. When purchasing LED lamps it is important to understand the information on the label (Figure 1) and the lamp (Figure 2) in order to make the right decision. Information that may be found of the label or the lamp can include:

- **Lumens** – the amount of light output from a lamp (brightness)
- **Watts** – the amount of energy required to create the light output (power draw)
- **Dimmable vs. Non-dimmable**
- **Average Rated Life** – the average rated life for a non-LED lamp is the time it takes for 50 percent of the lamps to fail. For LEDs, usable life (L70; see figure 1)) is the point in time when LEDs produce 70 percent of their initial light.

### Dimming Issues

The majority of poultry houses are equipped with some version of a triode alternating current (TRIAC) switch light dimmer to adjust lighting levels during the flock. A TRIAC is a small semiconductor device, similar to a diode or transistor. Without getting too deep into electrical engineering, light dimming works something like this. Resistors rapidly shut the light circuit off and on to reduce the total amount of energy flowing through the circuit. The lamp circuit is actually switched off many times per second. The switching cycle is built around typical alternating current (AC). Alternating current has varying voltage polarity in an undulating sine wave that fluctuates from a positive to negative voltage. In other words, the moving charge that makes up AC is constantly changing direction.

In the United States (U.S.), this alternating cycle (moving from positive to negative voltage) happens 60 times per second. This frequency is referred to as hertz. Common electrical supply in the U.S. is 60 hertz (meaning the current changes direction or “alters”) 120 times, or 60 cycles per second. A light dimmer actually “chops” or interrupts the sine wave based on the dimmer setting. It automatically shuts the light circuit off every time the current changes direction. This happens twice per cycle (120 times per second). It will turn the light circuit back on when the voltage reaches a certain point. This “turn-on point” is based on where the dimmer switch is set. If the dimmer switch is turned to a brighter setting, the cut-on point is much later in the cycle and the circuit is off for much of the cycle, keeping the light level fairly dim. This is ideal for incandescent lighting because the tungsten filament in incandescent lamps is slow to heat up and cool down and the human eye sees the light output as a constant level of decreased brightness without any flicker. The longer the interruptions in the sine wave, the dimmer the light.

### Color Rendering Index (CRI)

- The CRI is a measure of the accuracy of the color perceived under the light of the lamp as compared to color perceived under natural light (i.e., sunlight). A lower CRI value indicates that some colors may appear unnatural when illuminated by the lamp. A CRI of 100 represents the maximum value. For poultry applications, look for LEDs that have a CRI of 80 or greater.

- **Kelvin (K)** – the color or appearance of the light that the lamp emits. Warm/soft white light (similar to incandescent light) has a range of 2,700 – 3,000 K. Natural white light has a range of 3,000 – 4,500 K and cool white light has a range of 4,500 – 6,500 K. Broilers today are often grown under 5,000 K while layers and broiler breeders are more likely grown under 2,700 – 3,000 K.

**ISSUES DIMMING LED LAMPS**

*Tom Tabler*, *Jonathan Moon*, and *Jessica Wells*

1 Mississippi State University Extension Service, and 2 Mississippi State University Poultry Science Department
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That’s a quick and very elementary description of how a TRIAC light dimmer works in a chicken house. TRIAC dimming was first introduced in 1960 and, since that time, has been used primarily with incandescent and fluorescent lighting circuits. It has worked well because incandescent lighting is a simple resistive load and the relationship between current, voltage, and brightness is linear, direct, and straightforward. A change in the voltage affects the current proportionally. Unfortunately, this is not the case with LED technology. LEDs do not like interruptions in power; they require constant current. LED lamps do not have a resistive filament, and by design are complex loads. All LEDs require a driver in order to dim. Because they are low voltage, direct current sources, LEDs need drive electronics to convert the alternating current that flows through power lines into a usable and regulated direct current source. A good LED dimmer will have resistance built into the dimmer to control the output of electricity to ensure consistent performance when dimmed. If you take an LED lamp apart, you will find a small circuit board with little diodes and other things attached on the inside. Because these diodes rely on drive circuitry to ensure constant current and to adapt power and voltage for their use, LEDs often do not function properly when paired with a non-LED TRIAC dimmer. For example, at very low dimming levels, an LED driver that is designed to supply constant current or voltage may try to compensate for the TRIAC dimmer’s interruptions in the AC sine wave by pulling in additional current, causing the LED to remain too bright or to flicker. Problems that have been observed when trying to operate LED lamps with TRIAC dimmers include:

- Ghosting…cannot completely cut off the current….lights cannot be totally turned off
- Linearity issues and “dead travel”…lights turn on full bright as dimmer level is raised or turn off completely as dimmer level is reduced without a linear increase or decrease in light level
- Difficulty in dimming lights to very low levels
- Excessive lumen depreciation much too soon in the life of the lamp

**Light dimmers should be compatible with the specific LED lights installed. Never mix brands or wattages of lamps in the same poultry house.** Different LEDs have different electronics, different dimming capabilities, different in-rush currents, different starting thresholds, etc. No dimmer can handle all these different scenarios. There is simply too much electrical non-compatibility.

Improvements over TRIAC dimming include the metal-oxide semiconductor field effect transistor (MOSFET) or the insulated-gate bipolar transistor (IGBT) dimmers. There is no universal standard to determine which device offers better performance in a specific type of circuit. It varies depending on applications and a wide range of factors such as speed, size, and price. However, historically speaking, low-voltage, low current, and high switching frequencies favor MOSFET circuitry while high-voltage, high-current, and low switching frequencies favor IGBT circuitry. MOSFET circuitry was specifically designed for operations of 20 amps or less. Many poultry house controllers communicate with light dimmers using 10 amps.

**Light sockets**

Another serious issue is putting new LED lamps in old, damaged light sockets. Older, cracked, broken, corroded keyless sockets are causing multiple problems on poultry farms today. Corrosion in keyless sockets results in added resistance in the circuit and can quickly cause premature bulb failures. Other problems include poor dimming capability at low levels, excessive light depreciation, and intermittent flickering. Growers often assume that if the lamp is not performing properly, it is defective and they will replace it under warranty. However, thousands of LED lamps that have been replaced under warranty have turned out to be fine when sent back to manufacturers. In many cases, the problem was not the lamp but the conditions the lamp was exposed to.

LEDs have outstanding energy saving capabilities but they must be taken care of to achieve the maximum benefits. **Anyone considering switching from incandescent or fluorescent lamps to LEDs should consider upgrading to nickel-brass screw-shell sockets and replacing their old TRIAC light dimmer with a dimmer specifically designed to handle LEDs.** LED lamps are a high tech tool with much to offer the poultry industry. However, we now know that they need a strong supporting cast around them that includes proper wiring, good light sockets, and a light dimmer capable of handling sophisticated LED technology.

Also, make sure that the light dimmer has its own dedicated neutral running to it. The neutral should be directly from the power panel box and should not be a common neutral associated with any other equipment. We know much more today than we did 5 years ago about LED lighting. The most important thing we know is that it’s not as simple as just changing out the lamps like we once did.

**What now?**

The relationship between LED lamps and TRIAC dimmers is problematic at best. No one wants to spend additional money unless absolutely necessary. However, every grower must stay competitive. Monitor light levels inside the chicken house. Lumen depreciation is a fact of life. LEDs that are 5 years old are no longer as bright as they were when new. Proper light levels are critical to flock performance and welfare practices that are a huge consumer concern today. LEDS outlast everything else on the market today in terms of longevity. However, they will not last forever. They may not burn out but, at some point, lumen depreciation will require their replacement. That point may be 6 or 8 years down the road from date of purchase but they will need to be replaced. Like any other piece of equipment, they eventually wear out.

Fortunately, LEDs pay for themselves in energy savings alone in just a few flocks, not years. If necessary, replace the sockets and the dimmer to get the most out of LED lamps. Check out possible rebate and incentive packages offered by local utilities to upgrade to LEDs. Ask distributors about any specials available from them or lighting manufacturers. It is clear that a successful lighting program is more than just the lamps and the photoperiod and the foot candle level. All aspects of the system must work together to be successful….the wiring, the dimmer, the controller, the lamps, and the sockets.
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Another important aspect to consider today, at a time when many integrators are asking for additional floor light early in the flock, is the difference between omnidirectional and directional LED lamps (Figure 3). Omnidirectional lamps work great in a residential or commercial setting because the lamp spreads light from all sides. Therefore, the ceiling, walls, and floor all receive light. Omnidirectional lamps send roughly 35-40 percent of their light either out or up. This is not ideal for a chicken house because all the light needs to go down to the floor where the birds are, not to the walls or the ceiling.

Most LED lamps sold at do-it-yourself/hardware stores are omnidirectional lamps. They are often relatively inexpensive, have a short warranty, and are not designed for a harsh poultry house environment. Omnidirectional lamps are designed for household use; they are made with consumer-grade electronics and are not properly sealed for corrosive or damp/wet locations. Directional beam angled LEDs are wet-location rated to protect the LED diodes against washdown and are designed with commercial-grade electronic parts, which allow for better low-end light control ability. When selecting LED lamps for a poultry house, choose a manufacturer with a strong track record in agricultural lighting, select lamps with at least a 5-year warranty, and purchase from a distributor that understands poultry house lighting and can help you make the right decisions. There are multiple companies today that manufacture quality agricultural-type LED lamps rated for poultry house applications. Choose these over discount or bargain brands even though they may cost more up front. Long-term energy savings and flock performance will be better with an agriculture-rated directional LED lamp than with a residential omnidirectional LED not designed for poultry house environments.

Summary

Lighting programs are common practice in the poultry industry today. These programs can have a significant effect on the production efficiency and welfare of the flock. LED lamps have become quite popular in recent years. However, their popularity has brought to light other issues that were unrecognized before and that should be addressed. Many older poultry houses have TRIAC light dimmers that are often not compatible with modern LED lamp technology. In addition, many older houses have old, corroded, cracked, or broken light sockets that do not work well with LED lamps.

The energy savings associated with LED technology are remarkable and many growers have wisely switched to LED lamps to take advantage of this. However, with their increasing popularity we have learned that adopting LED technology is more than just switching out lamps. To achieve the most from LED technology, it is critical that growers utilize proper light sockets and have the dimmer properly grounded with its own dedicated neutral coming directly from the panel box and not have it associated with a common neutral tied to other equipment. In addition, to prevent issues such as ghosting, dead travel, excessive lumen depreciation, and difficulty dimming to very low levels, LED lamps should be controlled by a light dimmer designed to handle advanced LED technology. LED technology is an excellent tool for poultry growers and offers outstanding energy savings but it must be properly managed to provide the most return on investment.
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MAKE CHICKEN PAELLA IN UNDER AN HOUR
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INGREDIENTS
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon rind
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 teaspoon saffron threads, crushed
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 8 (6-oz.) skin-on, bone-in chicken thighs, divided
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt, divided
- 1 1/2 cups chopped yellow onion
- 1 1/2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme
- 5 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 1/2 cups uncooked Bomba rice
- 1/3 cup dry white wine
- 3 cups unsalted chicken stock
- 2 cups frozen green peas
- 1 red bell pepper, torn into pieces
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- Lemon wedges

PREPARATION
A Spanish dish from the Valencia region, paella is named for the cooking vessel itself: a round, shallow pan made of carbon steel that heats quickly and evenly. A good paella pan helps develop the socarrat, or crispy layer of rice crust on the bottom that’s the most prized part of the dish. A large skillet will work as well if you don’t have a paella pan. Look for short-grain Bomba or Valencia rice at specialty markets. Be aware that risotto rice like Arborio won’t work here, since paella rice isn’t meant to be creamy.

Step 1:
Stir together lemon rind, juice, and saffron in a small bowl; set aside.

Step 2:
Heat oil in a 13- to 15-inch paella pan or skillet with lid over medium-high. Sprinkle chicken with black pepper and 3/4 teaspoon salt. Add 4 chicken thighs to pan; cook, skin side down, until golden brown, about 6 minutes. Turn chicken over; cook until browned, about 3 minutes. Transfer chicken to a plate; repeat with remaining 4 chicken thighs. Add onion, thyme, and garlic to pan; cook, stirring often, 4 minutes. Add rice; cook, stirring often, 2 minutes. Add wine; cook until reduced by about half, about 2 minutes. Stir in lemon juice mixture, stock, and remaining 3/4 teaspoon salt. Nestle chicken, skin side up, into rice. Cover and reduce heat to medium; simmer until rice is just al dente, about 18 minutes. Uncover pan.

Step 3:
Add peas and red pepper pieces. Increase heat to medium-high; cook until rice begins to brown on the bottom and edges of pan, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat. Sprinkle with parsley; serve with lemon wedges.

Photo by Victor Protasio
UPCOMING EVENTS:

At all events involving growers, please practice strict biosecurity procedures

- Food Safety Roundtable
  OCTOBER 22
  MSU Lab, Pearl, MS

- Election Day
  NOVEMBER 5

The Grower Advisory Committee will meet quarterly at the call of the Chairman.

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