

ALABAMA POULTRY

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE ALABAMA POULTRY & EGG ASSOCIATION

Mike and Karen Hill with
granddaughter, Evie,
and Mike's best friend
and constant companion,
Beau.

Alabama Poultry Farm Family of the Year Mike and Karen Hill

We say goodbye to Wanda

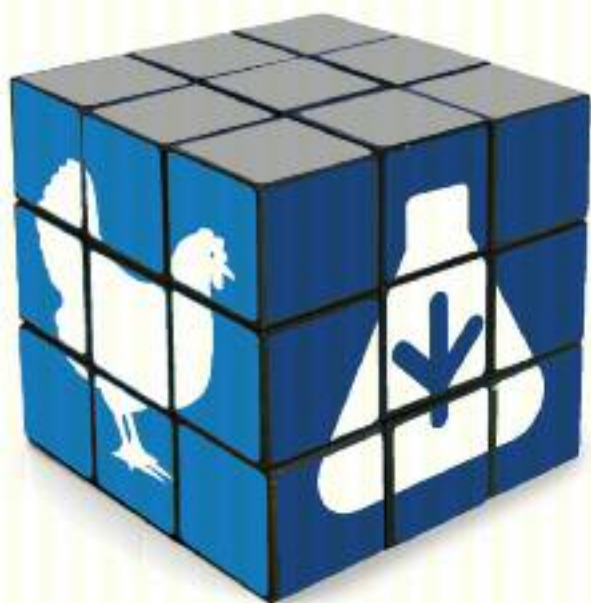


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CEO's Message



The Alabama Poultry & Egg Association has suffered quite a loss with the sudden death of AP&EA Administrative Director Wanda Linker. We are all feeling it deeply. Wanda was here when I came 24 years ago. She had already outlasted three previous executive directors, and there were times that I thought she might outlast me.

Even as we struggle to come to grips with her absence, we know that her family is also struggling with her loss. Our heartfelt condolences go out to all the Linker family, as we keep them in our prayers.

On a happier note, the 2019 *Evening of Fun* was a great success. Our entertainment was terrific. The kids of the Red Bay High School FFA String Band are always a threat to steal the show, and this year was no exception. Both Danielle Bradbery and Michael Ray exceeded our high expectation with performances worthy of their ACM nominations. The Black Jacket Band at our dance was outstanding as well. It's not too early to start making plans to attend the 2020 *Evening of Fun*.

Congratulations to Mike and Karen Hill, Tyson growers from Holly Pond, on being named Alabama Poultry Farm Family of the Year for 2019. It is hard to believe that they have only been in the poultry business for five years, and yet are one of the top producers for Tyson Foods. Their dedication and attention to detail has paid off, setting an example for others to follow.

Our association has been blessed by a number of dedicated friends. James Sanford is one of them. For 14 years, he has run our "Big Bass" fishing tournament, getting to Lake Guntersville at 3:30 am., to register participants and getting everything organized. Sadly, for us, he is retiring. Thanks, James for all that you have done.

Speaking of dedication, that adjective applies most especially to Mitchell Pate. He has had an outstanding year as AP&EA president, but even before that, he has been active in the association in many capacities, and always with a wonderful sense of fun. His organizing the effort to provide meals to the workers and families during the aftermath of the Lee County tornados is just one of the high notes of his term as president, even as, in his real job, he was overseeing the final work on the administration building at the Miller Center. Thank you, Mitchell, for a job well done.

Featuring This Issue

Saying Goodbye to Wanda	pg. 4
Association News	pg. 6
Meetings	pg. 6
Grower-Allied Sporting Clays	pg. 10
"Big Bass" Fishing Tournament	pg. 12
Evening of Fun Golf Tournament	pg. 14
Evening of Fun Concert and Dance	pg. 16
Alabama Poultry Farm Family of the Year	pg. 20
Industry News: Aviagen Revamps Albertville Hatchery	pg. 24
FFA Convention and Awards	pg. 26
Auburn Graduation Breakfast	pg. 26
Practical Applications	pg. 28
Calendar of Events	pg. 30

In Memoriam: Wanda Linker

For forty-four years, she was the voice on the phone, the presence in the office, the go-to person at the Alabama Poultry & Egg Association. She arranged the meetings, answered the questions, kept the records and did just about everything that needed to be done, first in Cullman and then in Montgomery.

Serving under four executive directors, most association members cannot remember a time when Wanda wasn't there. And, while she wasn't there at the beginning, starting in 1975, she quickly became the foundation stone for four generations of Alabama poultry professionals.

On June 14, the day before the AP&EA *Evening of Fun*, and three days before her 67th birthday, Wanda just didn't wake up. She had been having some problems with a headache. In fact, she had been to the doctor, but it was believed that it was just a sinus infection.

Her memorial service was held on her birthday, Monday, June 17. Wanda's granddaughter, Chelsea Boston, delivered the eulogy for her beloved Granna. One anecdote that she shared was Wanda correcting all of her school papers.

I share that memory as well. For the past 12 years Wanda has proofread and corrected every magazine that I have produced. Her writing bible, the *Associated Press Stylebook*, was always at her side. I used to play a game with her. I would always try to slide a

reference to Dr. Tony Frazier as "State Vegetarian" rather than State Veterinarian past her. She always caught it – and fussed at me over it. It became a personal joke between us. I'll miss that good-natured banter.

As many know, Wanda was not a morning person.

Speaking to her in the office before she had had her first Diet Coke would get you one of her deadly eye rolls and an extended chin. But, after the Diet Coke and Rudy's Sausage Biscuit, she was ready to be approachable.

Suffice it to say, we're going to miss her.

Survivors include her husband, Michael F. Linker of Pike Road; two daughters, Leslie Linker Hooks of Pike Road and Lindsey Linker Baker (Jared) of Clanton; three granddaughters, Chelsea Hooks Boston (Anthony) of Enterprise;

Riley Hooks of Pike Road; and Kira Baker of Clanton; two grandsons, Michael and Sean Baker of Clanton; one brother, Donald L. Hunter (Linda) of Cullman; one sister, Kathy Byrd (Freddie) of Cullman; sister-in-law Lindsey Beaver of Rock Hill, SC; four nieces, seven nephews and many other family and friends.

An Auburn University poultry science scholarship fund has been set up in her honor. Checks can be made payable to the Alabama Poultry Foundation and sent to the Alabama Poultry and Egg Association at P. O. Box 240, Montgomery, AL 36101.



Wanda Linker 1952 – 2019



Congratulations to
**Mike &
Karen Hill**



"Since we already had an existing relationship with First South Farm Credit with our excavating business, First South was the logical next step to achieve our goal. The First South Farm Credit staff, with their vast knowledge of the poultry industry has allowed us to pursue Karen's passion to farm full time."

-Mike and Karen Hill



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Larry Raughton and Byron Irwin of Ecodrum Composter spoke at several meetings.



Alabama Poultry Car Tag scholarship winner, Molly Meeks, and the Wiregrass board.

May Association Meetings Focus on Mortality, Services and Insurance

On May 2, the Wiregrass Poultry & Egg Association met at the Family Life Center at Ino Baptist Church in Kinston. The program for this meeting was presented by and sponsored by Byron Irwin and Larry Raughton of Ecodrum Composter. The meal was sponsored by First South Farm Credit of Andalusia and Enterprise, Alabama Ag Credit of Enterprise, and FFB Ag Finance of En-

terprise.

At the meeting, the Wiregrass Association presented its first scholarship from the sale of Alabama Poultry car tags to Molly Meeks, the daughter of Pilgrim's broiler growers Chris and Kristie Meeks of Opp.

The Randolph County Poultry & Egg Association held its meeting on May 9, at the ALFA Building in We-

dowee. Josh Parmer of J&J Poultry, LLC., sponsored the meeting. He used the meeting to introduce his company's services to area producers.

Beeland Park in Greenville was the site of the May 23, meeting of the Central Alabama Poultry & Egg Association. Once again Byron Irwin and Larry Raughton presented the benefits of the Ecodrum Composter system as an alter-



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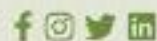
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Michael Starling, Member in Henry County

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native to freezers for mortality disposal.

The meeting was sponsored by Ecodrum Composter, Beth Gardner, FFB Ag Finance, Inc., First South Farm Credit of Luverne and Alabama Ag



Credit of Montgomery. Alexis Adkins of Ariton and her ag teacher, Shelby Thompson. Alexis is the recipient of a \$2,000 2+2 Program scholarship at Wallace Community College in Dothan. Although she is a rising senior, she will be attending the beginning poultry science course at Wallace. It will count as her ag course at Ariton High School.

Credit of Montgomery.

The Southeast Alabama Poultry & Egg Association met on May 28, at Ariton Baptist Church. Speakers for the event included Larry Raughton of Ecodrum Composter and Mistie Wiggs of Randy Jones and Associates. She discussed a number of new insurance programs that are now available to farmers.

The meal was sponsored by First South Farm Credit of Ozark; Alabama Ag Credit, Dothan and Enterprise; and Beth Gardner, FFB Ag Finance, Inc.

These meetings are important for growers and the betterment of the industry. By staying informed, growers can operate more efficiently in the increasingly high-tech world of poultry production, thus becoming more profitable.

At these meetings strict biosecurity is essential. Growers are urged to change out of the clothes and shoes that they wear to work in their poultry houses.



SEAP&EA Pres. Michael Starling is now a grower representative on the AP&EA board.



Mistie Wiggs of Randy Jones and Associates talked about different types of insurance.



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GROWERS - Time to Shoot Some Clays

We will be holding two clay shooting events for poultry growers and allied industry leaders. Both events will start at 11:00 a.m., with a lunch and the clay shooting will start around 12:00 p.m. and conclude around 3:00 p.m.

Each team will consist of one allied member and three growers. The cost will be \$200 for the four person team and will be paid by the allied sponsors. Each participant will furnish their own gun and shells.

The north Alabama event will be Thursday September 5, 2019 at **CMP Talladega Marksmanship Park** located at 4387 Turner Mill Road, Tal-

ladega, AL 35160. Their phone number is 256-474-4408. The sporting clays manager is Tyler Smith. There is a limit of 15 teams that can compete. Lunch at this event will be provided by Jeff Sims of Animal Health International, Clint Lauderdale and Steve Carpenter of Jones-Hamilton Company.

The south Alabama event will be held Tuesday, October 22, 2019, at **Ravenwood Sporting Clays** located at 10671 Hwy. 431 South, Newville, AL 36353. Their phone number is 334-648-1440. The sporting clays manager is Chris Corley. There is a limit of 12 teams that can compete. Lunch at this

event will be sponsored by David Walker of K Supply.

Growers can form their own 3 person team and get an allied sponsor to sponsor and shoot with you, or Ray can put you with a sponsor as an individual or team. You can call Ray or Jennifer at the AP&EA office at 334-265-2732 to receive a registration form by e-mail, or you can use the form below, or you can give them your information and team members.

We hope this will be another fun and successful event for the growers and allied members. We need your participation to continue this fun event that

Grower and Allied Industry Sporting Clays Registration Form

Name _____ Company _____

Address _____ Phone _____ E-mail _____

Grower Team Members

Name _____ Phone _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Name _____ Phone _____

() Payment Enclosed () Invoice () Credit Card - Type _____ Amount \$ _____
Number _____ Exp. Date _____

Event: () North Alabama – CMP Marksmanship Park, Talladega () South Alabama – Ravenwood Sporting Clays, Newville

allows producers to relax and have fun away from the farm. Come mix and mingle with fellow growers and your allied friends, plus get a good free meal. **What a deal!!**

Please, pass the word and get your close friends together for a great outing.



Ladies are always welcome.

The advertisement features a large white bucket of IMPACT-P(NA) on the right, with a label showing a rooster. In the background, several white chickens are visible. The text "MICROBES MATTER" is written in large, green, 3D letters across the middle. Below this, a green banner contains the text "Get an edge over the competition. Choose which microbes dominate your litter." The main body of text describes the product as "The Litter Vaccine" and lists its benefits. At the bottom, the phone number 800-448-4723 and the website impactpoultryproducts.com are provided.

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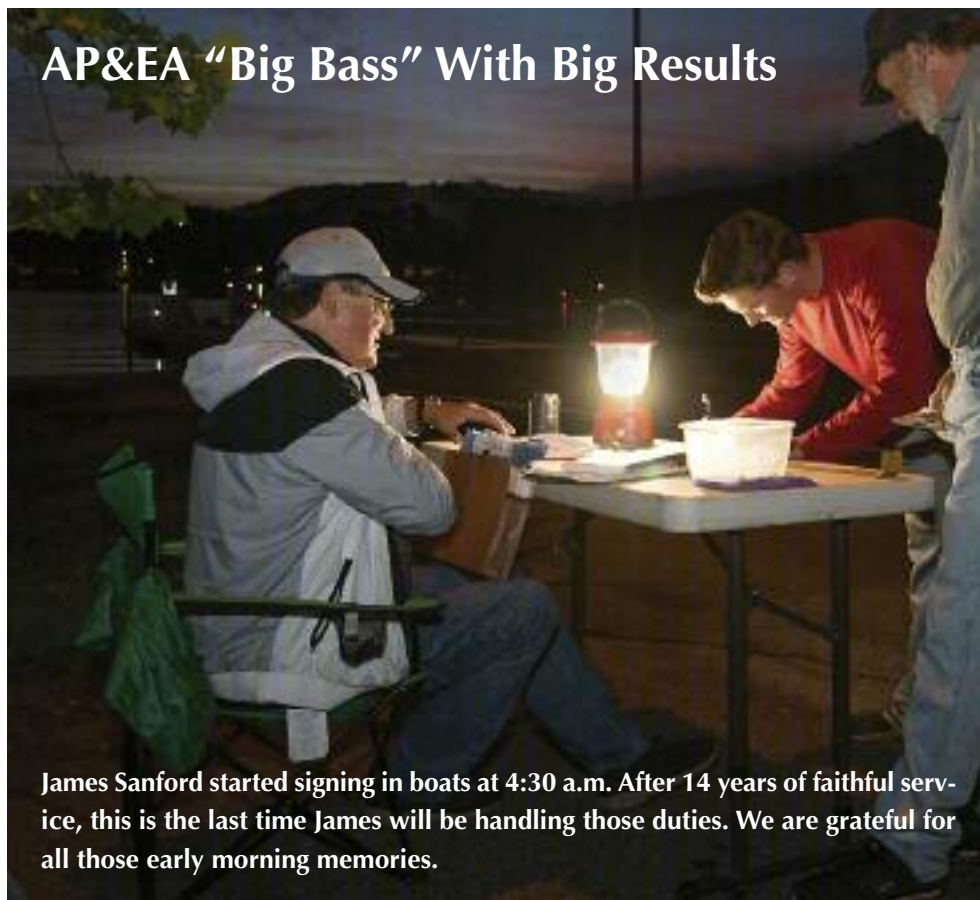
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AP&EA “Big Bass” With Big Results



James Sanford started signing in boats at 4:30 a.m. After 14 years of faithful service, this is the last time James will be handling those duties. We are grateful for all those early morning memories.



They Took It All

The team of Chris Mathews and Jeff Carpenter had a spectacular haul. Both caught bass weighing 7.3+ pounds. One was 7.32 and the other weighed in at 7.36 lbs. Neither Jeff or Chris knew who caught the slightly bigger fish, so they agreed to split the prize money. Their 26+ pound haul also helped them win the 1st place prize.

LAKE GUNTERSVILLE – On Friday, May 10, Alabama Poultry & Egg Association held its annual Big Bass Fishing Tournament. The potential bad weather that was predicted never materialized, so everyone had a grand time. Especially the team of Jeff Carpenter and Chris Mathews.

James Sanford opened registration at 4:30 a.m., and by 5:30 a.m., there were more than 30 boats in the water when Steve Smith began releasing the boats. Seven hours later, they were all in.

The weigh-in was pretty typical, with five fish totals running from 10 to 14 pounds, that is until Jeff Carpenter and Chris Matthews lugged their live-bag up to the scales. They started pulling out fish that got oohs and aahs from other fishermen. One seven plus pounder was followed by his twin brother, plus there were other big fish that took the poundage up. After every fish was weighed, the total was more than 26 pounds. That was 10 pounds more than the second place team.

That must've been some great fishing hole, and they're not saying where.



2nd place went to Mitch McCullough and Barry Randles



3rd place went to the team of Gil Summerlin and Brad Lenoir



4th place went to Tim Goodwin and Dustin McCullars



5th place went to Grant Bennett and Andy Leslie



There was a tie for 6th place with Josh Graben and Scotty Cox ...not pictured Sammy Riddle and Dwight Farmer

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The 2019 EOF Golf Classic

GLENCOE – The RTJ Silver Lakes Golf Course was the site of the 2019 AP&EA *Evening of Fun* Golf Tournament on Friday, May 17.

The weather for the 8:30 a.m. shotgun start was warm, but not unpleasant, as the 30 four-man teams headed to their tee boxes. High spirits prevailed as the poultry pros agreed that, “A bad day on the golf course always beats a good day in the office.”

The Robert Trent Jones Silver Lakes Golf Course was in great shape, as our golfers hit the two courses, named appropriately “Mindbreaker” and “Backbreaker.” The course was challenging and no one got through unscathed by disappearing balls. In fact, I have it on good authority that several water hazards rose dramatically due to the number of unidentified objects falling from the sky. And, at times, there seemed to be more golfers “fishing” for lost balls than actually playing. Still, there were some incredibly good shots and marvelous putts. I even managed to get some extraordinary putts on camera.

Best of all, everybody had a great time raising money for the association. It was a great day for that.

Back in the clubhouse, the poultry pros gathered for some good K-Supply provided barbecue for lunch and tall tales of golfing exploits, even as their scores were being tallied.

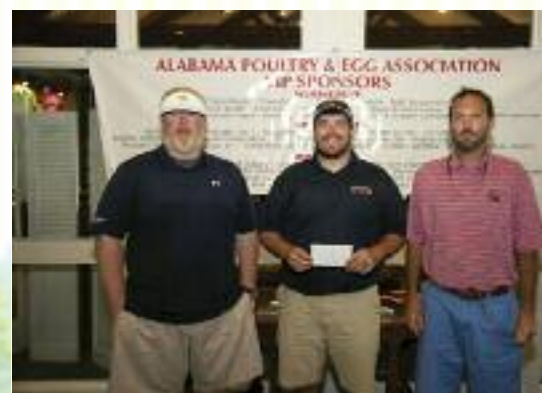
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The Winning Team: Craig Carter, Rick Moran, Tyler Threadgil and (not present) Travis Bentley



2nd Place: Frank Loftis, Clay Allen, Adam Langley and (not present) Clay Borden



3rd Place: Jeffrey Shaw, George Hatchcock, Allen Murphy and Logan Brandt



Closest to the Hole: Mark Gaines, David Monroe, John Putnam, Craig Carter and Greg Spence

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YOUR 2019 EVENING OF FUN

BIRMINGHAM – On Saturday, June 15, on a hot Saturday night in Birmingham, things got hotter still on the stage of the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex Concert Hall. It was time for the annual AP&EA *Evening of Fun*.

The crowd was still filing in when the award winning Red Bay High School FFA String Band took to the stage. These talented young musicians had just won the top spot in the FFA String Band competition at the recent FFA convention in Montgomery, and they were ready to perform. And perform they did, with songs like “Peter Pan,” “You Belong With Me,” “Dueling Guitars,” and finishing with “Little White Church.” It is no wonder that many folks see their performance as the highlight of the evening.

As the FFA kids left the stage, AP&EA CEO Johnny Adams welcomed everyone and introduced AP&EA President Mitchell Pate. Mitchell took a few moments to tell the crowd of the passing of AP&EA Administrative Director Wanda Linker on Friday. It was a sad moment, that Mitchell handled with grace.

He then introduced the current AP&EA officers, Treasurer Jason Shell, Secretary Casey Jones and Chairman of the Gower Committee Stan Usery.



Then It was time to introduce the Alabama Poultry Farm Family of the Year for 2019. CEO Johnny Adams introduced Mike and Karen Hill of Holly Pond. The Hills, and most of their family, joined Johnny onstage. Ray Hilburn, AP&EA associate director, presented them with a sign to display on their “Hillcrest” farm.

One other piece of fun business was the drawing for two large-screen televisions donated by River Valley Ingredients.

Then it was time for the entertainment. First onstage was the ACM New Female Artist of the Year nominee, and winner of season four of NBC’s *The Voice*, Danielle Bradbery. Bradbery performed many of the songs from her latest album *I Don’t Believe We’ve Met*, like “Sway,” “Worth It,” as well as hit singles “Shallow,” “Goodby Summer,” and “Slow Burn.”

Then the energy jumped as Michael Ray hit the stage. Also an ACM nominee for New Male Artist of the Year, Ray show just why he was nominated. Performing songs from his newest album *Amos*, he rocked the stage with songs that became hit singles like “One That Got Away” and “Get To You.” He even showed a softer side with “Her World Or Mine” and “I’m Gonna Miss You.”

With the concert over, it was time to head across the street to the dance at the Sheraton Ballroom.



Rockin' With the Black Jacket Party Band!

At 9:30, the Sheraton Hotel Ballroom came alive with the incredible sounds of the Black Jacket Band. Even though no one was wearing a black jacket, it did not matter. The music was enough to get you on your feet. Playing an eclectic (no relation to Eclectic, Ala.) blend of rock, soul, oldies and whatever mix you wanted, they played it. They were fun, and, after all, what more do you want to finish off an *Evening of Fun*?



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3 Factors that Impact Paw Health

Chicken paws have become a lucrative commodity in the industry with millions in exports annually. Paws also serve as an indicator of animal welfare during audits and can be a direct indicator of bird performance. Footpad dermatitis (FPD), the ulcerated lesions that can form on the pad of the paw, has the power to disrupt their potential. For the sake of welfare, profitability and performance, it's important to understand the top three factors that influence paw health.

1/ Litter Moisture

High litter moisture content has been shown to be a sole contributing factor to the development of FPD, especially before two weeks and as early as 3-5 days of age, with levels greater than 30% being very detrimental. Focus on litter and moisture management year-round to help avoid FPD. Even decaked and windrowed litter can cause severe burns if excess moisture is present.

2/ Bedding material and depth

The role of bedding material is to absorb and then allow for evaporation of moisture, which can be influenced by the material's particle size, moisture content and build up, and rate of caking. New bedding is often placed at inadequate depths. Research has shown a direct correlation between litter depth and FPD with paw scores improving as litter depth increased (Bilgili et al 2009). Increased litter depth leads to decreased moisture levels and improved paw quality, which positively impacts bird performance and health (Shepard et al 2017).

3/ Nutrition

Nutrition can impact the development of FPD in various ways, including affecting feces consistency and thus litter quality. For example, excess sodium can increase water intake thereby increasing litter moisture. One study that examined diets with equal protein:energy ratio with either low- or high-density levels showed broilers raised on the low-density diet had significantly fewer FPD cases than the high-density fed birds (de Jong et al 2015).



Mike and Karen Hill – Alabama Poultry Farm Family of the Year

HOLLY POND – Mike and Karen Hill have been selected as the Alabama Poultry Farm Family of the Year. It is quite a unique honor for growers who have only been growing for five years. But in those five years their farm has consistently ranked in the top 10 percent of Tyson Foods' Snead complex.

Karen's father, Cotton Pinyan, had a bull dozier business. Mike had started working with her father in the summers when he was 14. His parents owned a nursery business and he just did not like hoeing in the fields. Driving a bull-dozier was more to his liking.

He quickly became buddies with Karen's brother, Sam. He and Karen had started first grade together, and he was always at their house, especially during the summer.

They never dated, until one night in their senior year, he asked her to go to Cullman County Fair. It must have been an eventful date, because Mike and Karen married in Aug. 1979, after graduating from Holly Pond High School that May. Shortly afterwards they enrolled at Auburn University.

In 1986, one year out of college with a Master's degree in agricultural economics, Mike was working an office job for Alabama Cooperative Extension Systems in Winston County, and Karen was teaching. After a weekend at the races in Talladega, they brought their new baby, Meghan, to visit the family in Holly Pond. Cotton, tired of the constant demands of the dozier work and wanting to be a full-time farmer, offered them an opportunity to come home and help Mike take over the dozier business. After some discussion, Karen and Mike agreed.

The first 10 years were difficult. The two doziers that Mike started out with were old and, even though they had been well maintained, they re-

quired a lot of work to keep running. Still, it beat sitting behind a desk all day.

That same year, the family got into the poultry business when Cotton and Sam built eight 40' x 500' houses for Spring Valley, which Tyson later bought. Sam was at Wallace State Community College in Hanceville studying precision machining. Mike later became interested in the chicken business and approached Tyson in 2008, but never followed through.



Mike working on a pad for a new poultry house in Holly Pond. His best buddy, Beau, is in the cab with him.



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Boost sanitation levels	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reduce cleaning time	✓	✓	✓	✓
Safer environment for animals	✓	✓	✓	
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The Hill's farm is incredibly clean. Mike stays on top of maintenance issues, like replacing fan belts twice a year and washing the houses down after every flock. Karen has planted the shrubs and floertd outside the houses. You certainly don't see many poultry houses with attractive landscaping like this.

Before Karen, who was teaching culinary arts at the Cullman County Vocational School, retired in 2013, they had approached Tyson Foods again about growing for them. Tyson was not taking on any new growers, so they signed on with Ingram.

One day, while Mike was finishing up his pads, Kevin Allen of Tyson Foods, and a family friend, (Karen had known him as a student when she was teaching home economics at Holly Pond High School) showed up where Mike was working. Mike was scheduled to go to Kevin's Freebird Farm to do some work after he finished his own pads, and he was worried that Kevin might be in a hurry to get the work done.

Kevin, however, had something else in mind. Kevin instead offered them a contract with Tyson. After squaring everything with Ingram Farms, and getting the Tyson housing requirements, they began construction in April of 2013, building four 42' x 500' houses. They got their first flock in January 2014.

After five years, their poultry houses are immaculate. After every flock, Mike washes the houses down. They hire someone to come in and do the cleanout and windrow the litter. Karen has two young women who come in and help her set up the houses. Karen also keeps up the landscaping, planting

shrubs and flowers in front of the houses.

They realize that as new as their houses are, the houses will need upgrades in three to four years. Mike says that he doesn't understand growers that complain about having to upgrade their houses. He even changes his fan belts twice a year. The agricultural economist in him says, "In business, you've got to make upgrades to stay competitive."

Along with their other enterprises, they own and live on a 330-acre farm where they manage 175 beef cattle. The cattle operation consists of registered Angus, registered SimAngus, and commercial live stock.

Mike and Karen have two daughters. Meghan, their oldest, is married to Cobie Rutherford. Living in Starkville, Miss., Meghan is the lead pharmacist for CVS. Cobie is pursuing his PhD. in Animal Science at Mississippi State University and works for the Mississippi Beef Extension

Service. They have one son, Reason.

Amie is married to Jaret Veal, and lives in Hanceville. Amie has taken over her mother's old job as director of culinary arts and hospitality at the Cullman Area Technology Academy. Jaret works as a field rep for Pilgrim's Guntersville. He is currently building three breeder houses and will grow for Pilgrim's Russellville. They are expecting to get their first flock in March. They have a daughter, Evie, who is the apple of her grandfather's eye.

Congratulations to Mike and Karen and the entire Hill family, our 2019 Poultry Farm Family of the Year.



On stage with Johnny Adams and Ray Hilburn are (L-R) Karen and Mike Hill, holding Evie; Amie and Jaret Veal; Meghan and Cobie Rutherford, holding Reason. It's just too bad that Beau couldn't make the trip.



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Congratulations to Karen and Mike Hill, Hillcrest Farm, of Holly Pond, on being named 2019 Alabama Poultry Farm Family of the Year. The Hills have been using our freezers since starting the farm in 2014.

For more information and details, contact Randall Smith

256 - 970 - 6100



Aviagen CEO Jan Henriksen cuts the ribbon opening the new research and training facility.

Aviagen Transforms Old Albertville Hatchery Into Modern Research and Training Center

HUNTSVILLE – “Everything old is new again.” That phrase by American author Stephen King captures the sentiment behind Aviagen’s reviving of a decommissioned hatchery in Albertville, a rural community in northeast Alabama.

Aviagen has transformed the historic hatchery into the new Research and Training Center. In a ceremony on May 22, Aviagen CEO Jan Henriksen hosted the grand opening of the newly refurbished center. He said, “Aviagen is committed to investing in research and

development to bring ongoing bird performance improvement to our customers and to the industry as a whole.” Henriksen went on to say, “The Albertville Research and Training Center plays an important role in our overall mission to provide quality broiler breeding stock to our customers that ultimately help provide local communities with a healthy, affordable source of protein.”

Aviagen has instilled the new center with state-of-the-art technology and a rustic modern look, while preserving

much of the original natural materials and charm. The newly restored building will offer multiple spaces where Aviagen teams can meet and learn with their valued customers and industry colleagues.

The new Research and Training Center is part of a larger campus known as the Aviagen Product Development Center, which also includes a research hatchery, processing plant and breeder and broiler farm. The complete operation is integral to Aviagen’s global research and development efforts.



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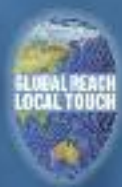


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Alabama FFA Vice President Maggie Edwards gives her final address as an FFA member.

Alabama FFA Holds 91st Annual Convention

With competitions being on June 4, in Auburn, the award ceremony was at the Montgomery Performing Arts Centre-MPAC on Thursday, June 6.

One highlight of the ceremony was the eloquent and inspirational speech given by Maggie Edwards, the daughter of Greg Edwards of Woodland. Greg is live production manger for Pilgrim's Carrollton, Ga., and a grower himself.

Once again the Thorsby FFA walked away with the poultry judging



The Thorsby poultry judging team once again won the competition, with McKinley Mims taking the top individual honor.

competition with McKinley Mims taking the top individual prize.

John Thomas Upchurch of Clay Central High School won the top spot in poultry proficiency.

Congratulations to all these outstanding students. Some great careers await them.



Winner of the Poultry Proficiency Award in poultry production was John Thomas Upchurch of Clay Central High School.

AP&EA Sponsor 115th Ag Graduation Breakfast

Parent, grandparents, relatives, friends – and especially Ag graduates poured into the Ham Wilson Arena on Saturday, May 4, to fellowship and get some pre-graduation recognition, as well as breakfast, sponsored for the 115th time by AP&EA.

The omelet pans were turning, wielded by department of poultry science faculty and staff, while undergraduate poultry science students served the sides.

As usual, it was a great way to start a great day of celebrating the accomplishments of so many wonderful young students, and acknowledge all of their close support network as well.

It gave them one more opportunity to yell "War Eagle!"



AP&EA Associate Director Ray Hilburn with poultry science graduates Ella Lawley, Alex Adornato, Lukas Taylor and Chandler Johnson, along with Dr. Sarge Bilgili, interim poultry science department head.

Alabama Poultry Magazine



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Dennis Brothers leads the tour of the Stand-Alone-Solar poultry demonstration farm on June 5, 2019 in Cullman on Terry Butt's farm.

Stand-Alone-Solar for Poultry Harnessing Renewable Energy for Commercial Broiler Production

National Poultry Technology Center, Auburn University

Dennis Brothers, Jeremiah Davis, Jess Campbell, Kelly Griggs, Gene Simpson, Jim Donald

Electrical power continues to be one of the largest variable expenses for commercial growers and is expected to increase over time. Currently, an average poultry farm will use approximately 1.5 KWH per square foot (SF) of growing space, or spend approximately \$0.16 - 0.22 / SF annually. The annual total varies with region and climate, but a typical four-house poultry farm can easily spend over \$20,000 per year on electricity alone. Increasing heat removal requirements of the birds and increasing electricity charges guarantee this figure is only going to go up, making electricity cost an increasing concern for growers.

Renewable energy is a hot conversation topic and the use of solar panels to supplement poultry production is nothing new. In fact, many poultry farms across the state and the nation have solar panels either mounted on their roof or mounted on the ground nearby. However, these systems are typically involved in some manner of "net-metering", or selling the solar-produced electricity back to the utility company

for a contracted fee. These contracts typically have electrical production limits, regional availability, and pay for only a fraction of the power purchased. Not all utility companies choose to participate and contracts vary greatly for those that do. Because of this, solar energy opportunities have been limited for poultry growers in Alabama.

The National Poultry Technology Center (NPTC) and the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station at Auburn University, along with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, have partnered with Tyson Foods, Southern Solar Systems, Atlantic Power Solutions and Rotem/Diversified, for a pilot project in Cullman, Alabama – Stand-Alone-Solar (SAS) power for poultry. SAS is a poultry specific solar micro-grid system, designed by Southern Solar Systems with input from the NPTC, and is currently online growing birds. The SAS system collects, stores and uses solar energy to directly power a modern 54' x 500' broiler house. All power used is to be generated by the system and none of the



power produced is put back onto the utility grid. Photovoltaic solar panels supply DC power to a battery storage bank. Inverters along with supporting control systems then supply stable AC power to the house. A diesel generator, capable of both charging the batteries and running the house as a backup, is part of the SAS system. The SAS system supplies 100 percent of the electrical power needed to run the fans, lights, pumps, etc. The unique attributes of the SAS system also hold great potential for bird environment improvements related to ventilation and house conditions. The system must work in the hottest of summers and the coldest of winters; therefore, we will be exploring all of these potential benefits, as well as any potential downfalls, over the next twelve months of the SAS trial. The ultimate goal is to optimize and design a system that a poultry grower can install on a farm and feel secure in its ability to handle all of his power needs.

All the components of the SAS system come with extended warranties. For



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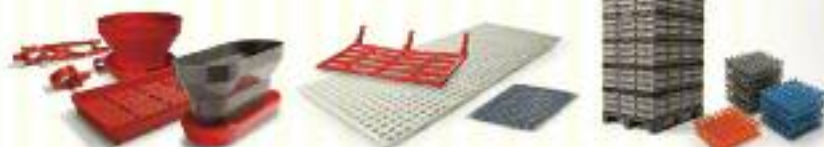
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example, the solar panels have a 25-year warranty and inverters and accompanying controls have 10 year warranties. We estimate that currently available batteries would last well over 15 years. Further optimization efforts will be explored through the trial period, as well as integration of the poultry house control systems with SAS control systems.

The final economics of the SAS system are yet to be determined. Further decreases in component cost and the benefit of economies of scale should lower the price of a future SAS system. A primary goal of the trial is to further develop and optimize the system to be cash flow positive on day one, essentially paying for itself from the beginning by replacing the variable cost of the power bill with a fixed cost, amortized over a long term – 15 years typically. This way a grower effectively “locks in” his electricity cost for the life of the system. We project the final cost will be at a level that lowers the farm’s overall production cost by several thousand dollars a year, even after all SAS system costs are covered, including interest, insurance and maintenance. Once a grower pays off the note for the system, his electricity costs would be further reduced to insurance and minimal SAS system maintenance costs. Information gained during the next 12 months of the trial period will guide op-



timizations efforts.

One of two existing 7-year-old, 54’ x 500’ poultry houses were chosen to power completely using the Stand-Alone-Solar (SAS) system. The matching house of the pair will remain utility company powered for comparison over a 12 month trial.



In the battery and inverter room, there was an explanation of the system by Southern Solar Systems.

Advertising

Alabama Ag Credit	pg. 7
Aviagen	pg. 25
AVINEW	pg. 30
Boehringer Ingelheim	pg. 31
Cumberland	pg. 27
Ecodrum	pg. 9
FarmLab	pg. 21
FFB Ag Finance, Inc.	pg. 11
First South Farm Credit	pg. 5
Georgia Poultry	pg. 22
Impact Poultry Products	pg. 11
Jones-Hamilton PLT	pg. 19
Live Oak Bank	pg. 8
Loader Services	pg. 24
Northwest Envirofan	pg. 30
Randy Jones & Associates	pg. 32
River Valley Ingredients	pg. 23
Southwest Agri-Plastics	pg. 29
Sunbelt Rentals	pg. 13

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Alabama Poultry Industry Workshop
September 24 -25, 2019
Lake Guntersville State Park Lodge

Allied Scholarship Golf Tournament
Friday, Oct. 18, 2019
Chesley Oaks Golf Club
Cullman, Ala.

Clay Shoots

CMP Talladega Marksmanship Park
Sept. 5 or Oct. 10



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REFERENCES

1 Perozo, F. et al (2008). Avian Pathology, 37:3, 237-245.

2 Data on file.

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