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ALABAMA POULTRY

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE ALABAMA POULTRY & EGG ASSOCIATION



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President's Message

One thing is for certain: Change is inevitable, and 2020 has been nothing but change.

Hurricane Sally hit our state extremely hard in September, but based on the hard work and preparation of our great producers, companies and government, our industry sustained minimal damage. Our producers are at the greatest risk when unpredictable weather happens, and I would like to thank them for all their hard work and dedication to our industry every day.

I would also like to thank our Alabama Poultry Foundation Committee for its work in helping ensure our poultry science students at Auburn University and local community colleges can continue their education through scholarship awards. This year, about \$55,000 in scholarships will be awarded to our future leaders in this great industry we all know and love. Good luck, students. We look forward to working with you in the future.

Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey has awarded \$26 million in CARES Act funds to assist Alabama agriculture segments impacted by COVID-19. This funding has been used to establish the Alabama Agricultural Stabilization Program. Of the \$26 million, \$4 million will be utilized through the Poultry Farmer Stabilization Grant Program to aid poultry farmers who have experienced downtime of more than 17 days between flocks and who have not been compensated otherwise. APEA has been working with other groups, including the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries and the governor's office, on the dispersal of these funds. Every grower should have received a detailed letter on how to apply by now.

On a lighter note, I am excited to announce that we have booked a new date with country entertainer Riley Green. The Evening of Fun concert will be held April 10 at the Birmingham Jefferson Civic Center. Green won the Academy of Country Music's New Male Artist of the Year Award in September, and there's a lot of excitement about him. Ticket sales were strong before the event was canceled over the summer. We plan to kick off the 2021 ticket sales campaign in late January. However, we have unfortunately decided to cancel our bass tournament for the year. We are going to look at options of when would be best to plan that event.

In closing, I want to wish everyone a happy Thanksgiving and a merry Christmas. I truly hope you and your families have a safe and blessed holiday season.

Sincerely,

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On The Cover

As one of many women in the poultry industry, Sarah Ballard works as a breeder field representative for Wayne Farms in Troy.

Photo by Caleb Hicks



2021 EVENING OF FUN

FEATURING

RILEY GREEN



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AU Poultry Science Department Partners with ADM Animal Nutrition



Poultry scientists Jessica and Charles Starkey have partnered with ADM Animal Nutrition to research poultry feed enzymes in broiler digestibility and growth.

Auburn University Department of Poultry Science faculty members Charles and Jessica Starkey have joined forces with ADM, a global leader in human and animal nutrition, to conduct ground-breaking research with poultry feed enzymes.

Through the Starkeys' agreement with ADM Animal Nutrition, students in Auburn's poultry science program are conducting experiments in feed mill enzyme processing stability and live broiler chicken growth and digestibility at the new, state-of-the-art Charles C. Miller Jr. Poultry Research and Education Center.

The research, which began in July, is further enhanced by an \$80,000 gift from ADM Cares to support the Starkeys' multispecies research and teaching program and help provide stipends for undergraduate and graduate students as well as visiting research scholars.

"Working with ADM will not only help accelerate our research, but it will directly benefit our students through diverse, hands-on educational experiences in our lab and through internship and networking opportunities," Charles Starkey, assistant professor of poultry science, said. "We see this as the beginning of a productive



Poultry science students will get hands-on experience with the Starkeys' research.

collaboration and look forward to working closely with some of the best enzyme scientists in the world at ADM."

Students in the Starkeys' research lab on Auburn's campus will work with ADM's other research and development facilities around the globe to help develop poultry enzyme products, improving animal health and nutrition.

Enzymes in poultry diets can increase the efficiency of digestion, allow feed producers greater flexibility in the types of raw materials that can be used in feed formulation, and help improve overall sustainability and environmental stewardship.

"We're excited about our partnership with Auburn University's Department of Poultry Science and are proud to support their mission to develop future innovators in the field of animal nutrition," said Todd Werpy, ADM chief science officer. "We're proud to partner with the Starkeys, accomplished researchers who will be working alongside our own research and development team to create cutting-edge solutions in animal nutrition." 🐔

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Michael Starling, Member in Henry County

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Feed Quality, Availability Essential for Optimum for Optimum Broiler Performance

By W. J. Pacheco, K. S. Macklin, D. V. Bourassa

Every year in the U.S., broilers consume approximately 50 million metric tons of feed, which translates to between 60 and 70 percent of total production costs. However, improvements in genetic selection and precise nutrition have allowed broilers to grow at a steady pace and reach their market weight in shorter time with less feed needed per pound of weight gain.

Since feed is typically a sole source of nutrients, it is critical to make sure that birds receive all necessary nutrients in every single bite. It is important to control feed quality at the feed mill and at the farm to ensure good physical and nutritional feed quality at the

feeder level. Though most of the burden associated with providing quality feed rests with the integrator, it is important to have good communication between growers and integrators to ensure that feed is delivered to the correct farm silo so it does not degrade physically or nutritionally before it reaches the feeder pan.

At the feed mill, the quality of incoming ingredients must be stringent, as their quality cannot be improved after receiving. Poor-quality ingredients are more difficult to manage and more prone to mold and bacterial growth during storage.

During grinding, it is important to have a good balance of fine and

coarse particles. Fine particles are important to improve pellet quality, as they can absorb heat and moisture faster during feed conditioning and have a greater surface area for digestive enzyme access during the digestion process. The inclusion of coarse particles greater than 1000 microns also is important, however. Coarse particles stimulate gizzard function and reverse peristalsis, which increases retention time of feed in the upper gut. That allows for greater nutrient digestion and absorption, thus leaving fewer nutrients available for bacterial growth in the hindgut.

During pelleting, all the steps (feed conditioning, pelleting and



Quality feed has a good balance of both fine and coarse particles.

cooling) must be carefully controlled to ensure good pellet quality without destroying exogenous enzymes and thermolabile nutrients. After pellets exit the pellet mill, they are moved through coolers that remove heat and moisture; they then either pass through crumblers if the feed is intended for small chicks (e.g., pre-starter and starter) or directly placed into bins prior to loading onto a feed truck. Afterward, feed is transported and unloaded through a high output auger and dropped vertically into on-farm bins.

The feed delivery process is constant, but it can be influenced by external factors, such as weather, which can lead to feed outages that can compromise animal performance. Good communication between the feed mill, live production managers and growers is important to ensure the feed is ordered and delivered in a timely manner. Growers or farm managers must control the amount of feed on hand and if, after feed arrival, they notice differences in feed color, smell or texture, they must communicate the findings immediately to their service person. In addition, if growers

observe sudden differences in animals' activity, such as increased or decreased feed and/or water consumption, they must immediately contact their service person, who can assess the situation and evaluate animal health or feed issues.

Between flocks, or at least once a year, it is important to conduct preventive and corrective maintenance of feed handling equipment. Once bins are empty, growers should inspect for leaks and promptly seal any leaks detected. A typical sign of a leak is feed sticking to the side wall or an area where mold has developed. Cleaning must be done carefully to ensure that lumps of moldy and potentially contaminated feed don't fall into the feed line. Bin boots must be regularly inspected and caked material cleaned out from each hopper before the first feed arrival.

Typically, moisture in the feed hoppers or condensation in silo walls due to temperature differences between day and night can lead to moldy feed buildup, which can lead to bacterial growth or, even worse, mycotoxin production.

If feed problems arise either at the beginning or during growout, collect feed samples from each feed hopper as the hopper is being filled from the cross auger. Samples should be analyzed to ensure that feed does not have nutrient deficiencies or toxicities. Feed can also be analyzed microbiologically to make sure the feed does not contain a hazard that can enter the human food chain. Analyzing more than one sample increases analysis cost but also increases confidence in the results.

Besides monitoring feed quality, the grower must also avoid feed outages, which can disrupt feeding patterns, slow down growth and cause birds to consume litter. Feed outages can disrupt the digestive system, disrupt intestinal bacteria and lead to digestion and feed passage issues.

At the end of the flock, timing feed to clean feed pans can reduce leftovers, but the practice must be done correctly to ensure that birds don't run out of feed. It is important to make sure cross augers and hoppers are emptied so that withdrawal pellets instead of starter/pre-starter crumbles are not available.

At the farm, it is important to understand the crucial role of feed availability and feed quality in birds' health and growth. Cleaning and maintaining feed equipment properly will help birds reach their genetic potential in terms of body weight and feed efficiency. Growers, farm managers and service persons should check feed quality and animal health regularly and coordinate with the feed mill to take samples for analysis if feed changes or if birds' eating and/or drinking patterns change. The ultimate goal of each player in the poultry industry is to improve animal welfare and health and to optimize performance. 🐔



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**‘THE SURVEY
SUGGESTED 45%
OF BREEDER
GROWERS SUFFERED
NEGATIVE IMPACTS.
WE ESTIMATE
THAT 25% MORE
POULTRY GROWERS
ARE ELIGIBLE FOR
THE PROGRAM
THAN BEFORE THE
MODIFICATIONS.’**

Adam Rabinowitz
EXTENSION ECONOMIST

—

Alabama poultry producers who suffered economic losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic may be eligible for financial aid under the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industry’s Alabama Agricultural Stabilization Program.

Specifically, that program’s Poultry Farmer Stabilization Grant Program designates \$4 million to assist growers who experienced extended downtimes between flocks, decreased birds per flock or changes in target grow-out weights for birds and who have not been compensated.

Dennis Brothers, an Alabama Cooperative Extension System, or ACES, agricultural economist at Auburn University said the poultry industry experienced challenges from the pandemic.

“Contract poultry growers are typically insulated from many risks that a traditional livestock producer would incur, like market price swings and inventory challenges,” Brothers said. “However, COVID-19 presented challenges to all

the agricultural supply chain, and contract poultry growers are no exception. Being highly leveraged operations on tight cash flows, any minor swing in their stable production cycle can cause major business financial problems.”

Federal agricultural support programs often don’t cover contract poultry growers, said Adam Rabinowitz, another Extension economist. Initial USDA programs to support farmers excluded contract poultry growers, and the Small Business Administration’s Paycheck Protection Program provided limited options.

“Contract growers get left out because of a misconception that not owning their birds insulates them from market and production impacts,” Rabinowitz said. “Contract growers are usually highly leveraged and are dependent upon the contracting company to supply the birds, the feed, veterinary services and general management support.”

When a company feels market stresses, it may pass the stress down to contract growers.

“Growers may face increased downtime between flocks, fewer birds per flock and changes in target grow-out weights,” Rabinowitz said. “These can mean negative outcomes for contract growers and present real marketing and production risks to their operations.”

Rabinowitz said when the initial stabilization program protocols were announced, concerns arose that they were too limiting for poultry growers.

ACES, led by Rabinowitz and Brothers in collaboration with the Alabama Farmers Federation and APEA, conducted a grower survey to gather data on growers’ losses from COVID-19. State agriculture officials modified the program supported by Extension’s data.

“The survey suggested 45 percent of breeder growers suffered negative impacts,” Rabinowitz said. “We estimate that 25 percent more poultry growers are eligible for the program than before the modifications.”



Alabama poultry farmers were eligible to apply for funds through the Alabama Agricultural Stabilization Program from Oct. 13 to Nov. 6.

Both Rabinowitz and Brothers agree that the state’s poultry growers will reap benefits from the Poultry Farmer Stabilization Grant Program.

“These relief funds can have significant impact on the growers who are a major part of Alabama’s largest

agricultural industry,” Brothers said. “We know that integrators offer some assistance to growers, but this program is important in cases where that assistance is less than the full loss or where no assistance was given.” 🐔

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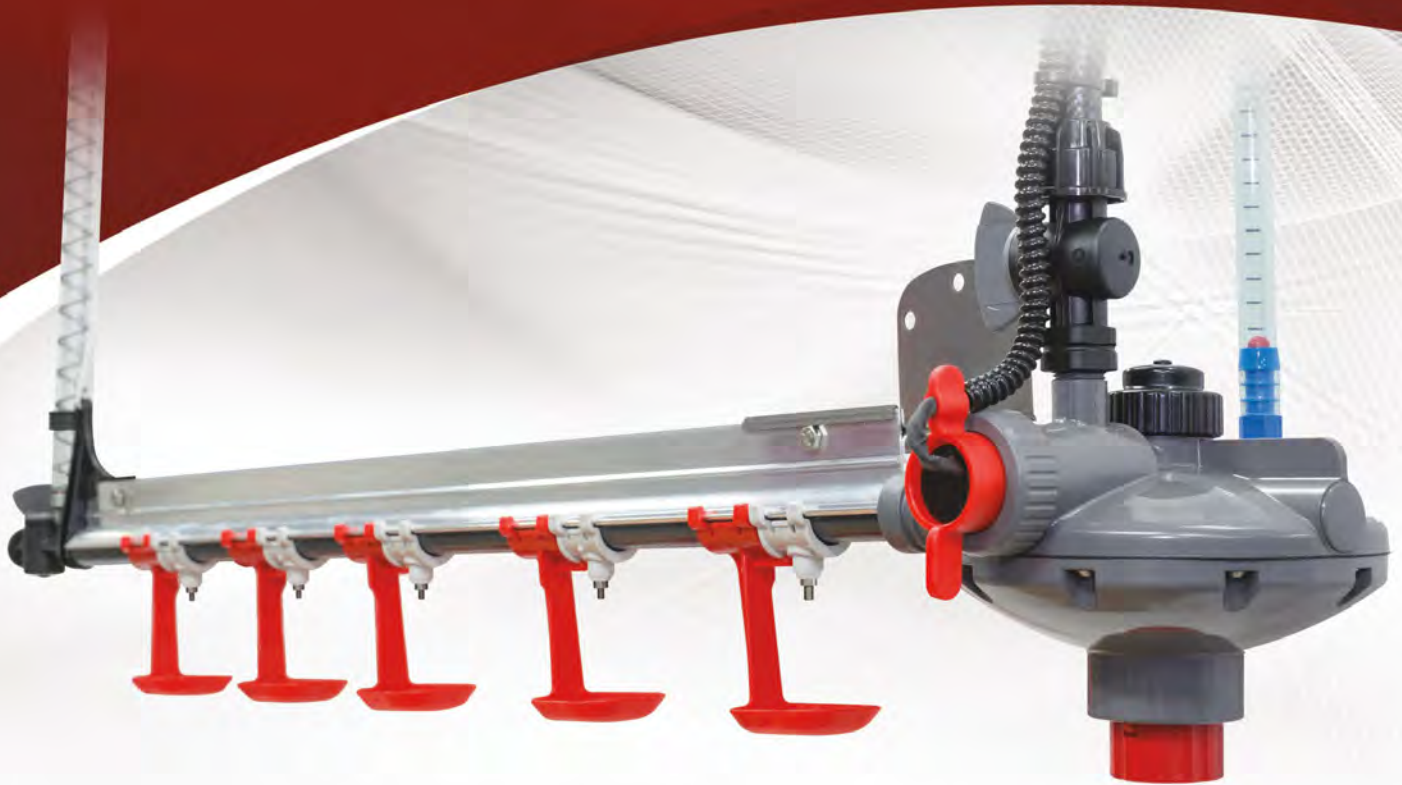
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WOMEN

As third shift manager, Ramona Harris keeps things running at the Koch Foods processing facility in Gadsden, where she's been for 39 years.

Breaking into Poultry Industry

By Caleb Hicks

Thirty-nine years ago, an 18-year-old Ramona Harris got a job hanging chickens on the processing line at what was then Spring Valley Poultry, now Koch Foods, in Gadsden.

Today, Harris is still at the facility, but now as manager of the third shift, which runs 11 p.m. to 7 a.m.

"I basically make sure everything keeps running smoothly from top to bottom," Harris said. "A little while after I started working here, I was going to school for nursing on the side, but one day, I changed my mind. After that, I never wanted to do anything else."

She attributes her move up the ladder to years of hard work and dedication.

"I did everything I could to learn everything

I could," she said. "I stayed late after work and learned to do paperwork and had folks mentor me. There is so much opportunity in the poultry industry, and being able to show other women that they, too, can move up the ranks is very inspiring."

As of 2017, Alabama had 2,461 male principal poultry farmers to only 1,059 female. Terri Gilley of Holly Pond is one of them.

The Cullman County native started growing chickens in 1981 with one house. For her, it's all about a challenge.

"I love the challenge that comes with working in the poultry industry," Gilley said. "It's tiresome, but you've got to be willing to work hard, pay attention to details and, most of all, be dedicated. You can't expect everything to always be perfect."



Cullman County native Terri Gilley owns and operates six chicken houses in Holly Pond and enjoys the fact she gets to run things her way. Gilley is shown here with her granddaughter, Caylee, who also helps out on the farm.

She now manages and keeps records for six poultry houses, and in her 31 years in the business, she has personally overseen every batch of chickens sold except one, and that was because of a visit to the emergency room.

For Gilley, the decision to start a farm was an easy one.

“It’s a blessing to be able to work in the agricultural industry and work for yourself,” she said. “I enjoy growing chickens and try to put my all in whatever I do. If I set my head to something, I’m going to do it.”

Down at Auburn University, Jessica Starkey is an assistant professor in the College of Agriculture’s poultry science department, where she manages a research lab and teaches multiple classes.

“My entire teaching philosophy centers around getting students to do their part and trying to motivate them to build skills they need,” Starkey said. “Our idea is that we want to give back and train students who can be productive and be leaders in the industry.”

Having grown up one of three daughters on a beef cattle ranch in rural Kansas, Starkey was accustomed to hard work and being productive. She said there was never any doubt in her mind



Auburn University's Jessica Starkey is a faculty member in the poultry science department, where she manages a research lab and teaches several classes for the next group of poultry science students.



she couldn't do something because she was a girl, and she applies that to her teaching strategy.

"Getting students to think about what they're doing and why they're doing it is one of my main goals," she said. "I see more and more young women finish our program and head into management trainee positions in the industry or end up as supervisors. That's encouraging to me."

Sarah Ballard, a 2016 Auburn alumna in agricultural communications with a minor in poultry science and a former student of Starkey's, is now a breeder field representative for Wayne Farms in Troy.

Ballard, who grew up around chickens in Crenshaw County, serves as a liaison between her five breeder farmers and the company, which she said is a small part of a bigger picture.

"It's rewarding to me to think that I've made a difference somehow and have been able to help this huge industry," she said. "It's great to show young ladies you can be in this industry and can succeed and move up. My manager now is a female. It's good to be able to say we can do the work and we can make a difference."

To Ballard, being a part of Alabama's largest agricultural industry means more than just a job.

"When you sit down to eat a meal with chicken on the table, it's very fulfilling to be able to say that this is what I've been doing all day — helping this industry feed the world," Ballard said. "The people I've met and the relationships I've made since starting in this industry are so valuable to me. I love what I do." 🐔

After graduating from Auburn in 2016, Sarah Ballard joined the Wayne Farms team. Now a breeder field representative, she services five farms in the Enterprise area.

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***'IT'S REWARDING
TO ME TO THINK
THAT I'VE MADE
A DIFFERENCE
SOMEHOW AND
HAVE BEEN ABLE
TO HELP THIS
HUGE INDUSTRY.'***

Sarah Ballard

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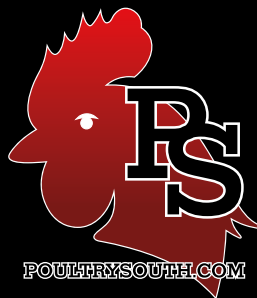
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BATES HOUSE OF TURKEY STILL SMOKIN'

AFTER 50 YEARS By Caleb Hicks



A trip along I-65 through Greenville almost isn't complete without a stop at Bates House of Turkey, which marked its 50th year dishing out the goods March 4.

Becky Bates Sloane, owner and operator of the restaurant, said she is proud and humbled to keep up a tradition her parents started in 1970 after the completion of I-65.

The new road rerouted traffic from the farm's plant location on U.S. 31 where they originally started selling turkey.

"We bought the property, and it was originally just supposed to be a sandwich shop," Becky said. "Daddy had always sold a lot of turkeys with people stopping by the plant. All of us (children) used to take turns sitting at the office on



Left: Becky Bates Sloane, right, owner and operator of Bates House of Turkey, joins her daughter, Michelle Sloane, center, and granddaughter Isabella Weekly outside the Greenville restaurant. Both Michelle and Isabella work at the eatery. Above: As a quarantine project during the COVID-19 pandemic, Michelle decorated a wall in the restaurant with newspaper articles from around the country on the restaurant.

Saturdays and Sundays selling turkeys to travelers. Once the interstate was built, we needed another plan.”

Purchasing the property proved to be the right choice. In 2019 alone, the restaurant hustled to dish out roughly 25,000 turkey dinners and 50,000 hickory-smoked turkey sandwiches to passersby, something Becky said is a family affair.

“There were five siblings, so seven people in the house total when I was growing up,” she said. “Each of my brothers and my sister all have done different parts of this business, but I always enjoyed helping my mother do the cooking in the kitchen. Now, my daughter and two of my grandchildren work at the restaurant.”

Becky was 19 when her parents opened the restaurant. At the time, she was studying home economics at the University of Montevallo. During her time home from college for holidays and weekends, she would fill in at the restaurant, which provided much insight and memories she holds close to her still.

“I worked here 25 years with my mother before she passed away,”

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**‘THE BIGGEST LESSON
I EVER LEARNED FROM
MY MOTHER WAS TO
TAKE CARE OF THE
LITTLE THINGS, AND THE
BIG THINGS TAKE CARE
OF THEMSELVES. SHE
TAUGHT ME SO MUCH.’**

Becky Bates Sloane

=====

Becky said. “The biggest lesson I ever learned from her was to take care of the little things, and the big things take care of themselves. She taught me so much.”

Becky’s daughter, Michelle Sloane, who helps manage the restaurant, said she also has many

fond memories growing up in the family business.

“As a kid, when we would come down and visit my grandmother here (in Greenville), you would walk in the back door and get hit with the delicious smell of the dressing she’d cook every morning,” she said. “I still come in, and that smells takes me right back.

“I couldn’t have paid for what I got out of working with my mom and grandmother for 20 years. Now, my son and my niece both work here. Sharing that experience with them and carrying on that tradition is just priceless.”

For Becky, the reason for continuing the legacy that goes back 50 years has also been because of the employees.

“The people who work here with us are our family, and it’s always been that way,” Becky said. “People who have retired from here have grandchildren here now. When you have family behind you, supporting you, it’s easier to be more successful.” 🐔

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF A NEW BROILER HOUSE IN ALABAMA

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\$357
THOUSAND


LABOR INCOME

is supported each year from ongoing operations; \$290,848 during the construction phase.


VALUE ADDED

\$504
THOUSAND

is supported each year from ongoing operations; \$395,594 during the construction phase.



FFA Students Take Home Top Poultry Prizes

Alabama FFA students competed for poultry judging team and career proficiency prizes during the 92nd Annual Alabama State FFA Convention in September.

"We're very proud of our top-winning FFA students this year," said Ray Hilburn, APEA associate director. "Although the state convention was virtual this year, we know students were able to learn valuable skills in the competition and learn more about the poultry industry."

Poultry judging teams are graded as a team on evaluating various types of poultry including live, processed and cooked. Teams are also graded on evaluating egg quality.

Competitors in poultry career proficiency determine a year-long project advised by the high school agricultural teacher and are graded on the project's successfulness and their responsibility they undertook. These projects can include backyard poultry or commercial poultry production. 🐔



Poultry Career Development Event: HEAVY PENNY A HEN

1ST Thorsby
Advisor: Brian Lucas

4TH Benjamin Russell
Advisor: Josh Williams

2ND Woodland
Advisor: Brad Johnson

High Scoring Individual
Olivia Powers
Thorsby
Advisor: Brian Lucas

3RD Albertville
Advisors: Gary Aycock;
Heath Golden; Allison Kincer;
Matthew Whisenant;
Jared Beasley

POULTRY CAREER PROFICIENCY: APEA

1ST Woodland
Sammie Yarbrough
Advisor: Brad Johnson

3RD Geneva
Carter Linton
Advisor: Michael Vann

2ND Ariton
Alexis Adkins
Advisor: Shelby Thompson

4TH Spring Garden
Mason Short
Advisor: Andrew Miller

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Winter Tips for Generator, Minimum Vent Fan and Stir Fan Maintenance

Jess Campbell, Jeremiah Davis and Kelly Griggs - November/December 2020
National Poultry Technology Center – Auburn University



As winter is approaching, now is the time to tune up the generator, minimum ventilation fans and stir fans to make winter growing success possible.

Generators: The above fuel tank has a little more than 11 inches of fuel inside and is overdue for a refill. We have received reports from generator professionals who have found poultry generator diesel fuel tanks either very low or out of fuel due to the bumper hay crops this year. If you use your tanks to fuel tractors, NOW is the time to double-check the tanks for adequate fuel storage on hand. We recommend having a minimum of three to five days of fuel on hand. Keeping the tank closer to full reduces the amount of surface

area available for condensation to form inside the tank during cold weather.

This is also a good time to inspect tanks for signs of moisture and contaminants in the bottom that might cause major problems for growers this winter, should generators have to run for extended periods. As always, **we need fuel, fuel filters, air filters and a good battery** to help us make it through winter. Make sure that block heaters are on and working and that rodent bait stations have been replenished and installed in the generator shed to prevent rodent damage. If you haven't had a professional generator tune-up this year, it might be a good idea to go ahead and schedule one soon.

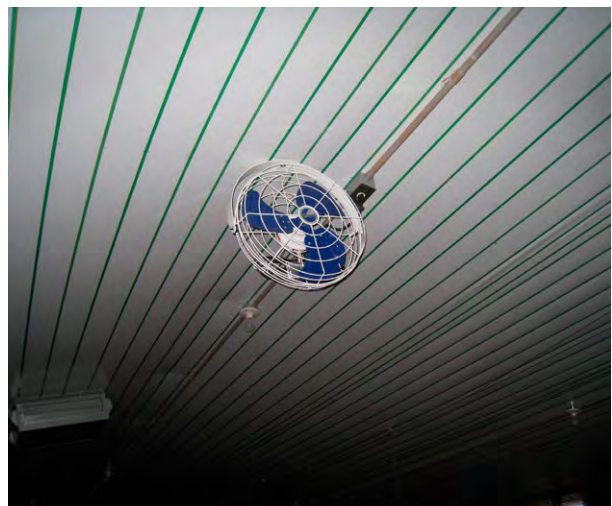


Minimum Ventilation Fans: Fans used for minimum ventilation are the most important fans on the farm. Each fan used on a five-minute timer cycles ON/OFF 288 times every day and 2,016 times in a week. This constant cycling coupled with operating under high target static pressures between 0.10"-0.15" causes these fan belts to wear out quicker than temperature control fans. Don't let worn out fans hold you back this winter. **We wish you could hear this picture!** The fan tensioner pulley is completely frozen up and acting as a belt guide instead of a tensioner. The belt has worn down the pulley to the point that it is almost in contact with the tensioner bearing. There is substantial noise, friction and reduced prop speed due to this frozen

tensioner. Something needs to be done ASAP to bring this fan back up to speed.

Today's bird demands proper air exchange and moisture removal from the house to keep litter dry and ammonia low and to give the bird every possible benefit to grow and gain weight in cold weather. Now is the time to get all minimum ventilation fans tuned up and ready to go for cold-weather operation.

Stir Fans: Now is also a good time to clean all stir fans and inspect them for damage. Any stir fan that is not working properly should be replaced. Stir fans are typically installed to improve litter conditions and environmental control efficiency, and they do a good job of this when used. They



also benefit the grower in other ways. All heat systems benefit from the use of stir fans to heat the house more efficiently and more evenly. The use of these fans helps promote more uniform floor temperatures, keeps cold air leaks from staying on the floor, improves minimum ventilation moisture removal and keeps in-house heat from staying stratified at the ceiling between ventilation cycles.

We recommend using stir fans to mix in-house air during preheat, brooding and minimum ventilation and anytime the heaters are running inside the house. Using the electronic controller to manage stir fan operation is another useful tool. Once the house transitions into temperature control mode and stays in that mode for the duration of the flock, the stir fans can be turned off.

For more winter housing information, visit poultryhouse.com or contact one of our team members.

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Good luck this winter from the NPTC.

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For more information and details, contact Randall Smith

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