



# Poultry Voice

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## 55<sup>th</sup> Annual International Poultry Exposition (IPE)

### Inside this issue

IPE Exposition.....	1
Exotic Newcastle Disease in Western States.....	3
International News.....	3
Agricultural Security Issues.....	4
Lawsuits/Complaints.....	4
Animal Rights Activists Unhappy.....	5
Vandalism.....	5
Upcoming Meetings.....	6

The IPE was held as usual in the newly renovated Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta, Ga., Jan. 22-24, 2003, with visitors and participants from all over the world. It was preceded on Jan. 20-21 by the International Poultry Scientific Forum, put on jointly by the Southern Poultry Science Society and the Southern Conference on Avian Diseases (SCAD), and co-sponsored by the U. S. Poultry and Egg Association. Scientific presentations (oral and poster) were given in all aspects of poultry production--environment and management, nutrition, pathology, physiology, processing and products, and avian diseases. For the first time there was a graduate student luncheon. The SCAD keynote address was on "Human Health Risks from Use of Virginiamycin in Chickens." It was delivered by Dr. Kenneth Bafundo of Phibro Animal Health, Fairfield, N. J. After the keynote address, each society held business meetings at which awards were given for graduate student presentations.

The IPE was attended by 19,173 visitors from 86 countries, 49 states, and the District of Columbia, and 880 exhibitors. (Watt PoultryUSA, Feb. 2003). Concurrent with the beginning of the exhibits on Wednesday January 22, was the College Student Career Program, sponsored jointly by Elanco Animal Health and the U. S. Poultry and Egg Association. This program makes college student resumes available for review by poultry and allied companies and ensures on-site interviews. At the opening session and orientation, Bill Lovette of Tyson Foods delivered a lecture on "Opportunities in the Poultry Industry." The student career program continued till noon on Friday, Jan. 24.

A general conference meeting of the National Poultry Improvement Program (NPIP) was held on the afternoon of Jan. 22. The meeting focused on the outbreak of exotic Newcastle disease in California, and the USDA's control program and strategies for future avian influenza (AI) outbreaks. The meeting was open to the public without comment, under the direction of Andrew Rhorer of the NPIP.

Dr. John Smith, USDA-APHIS, gave a summary of the proposed control plan for low-pathogenic avian influenza (LPAI). At present, there is no U. S. control program for LPAI including H5 and H7. There is a move toward making all H5 and H7 AI outbreaks reportable, regardless of their intravenous pathogenicity index (IVPI).

At the NPIP meetings in May and October 2002, subcommittees presented their draft plan. Major provisions indicate that to participate and qualify states need to maintain a U. S. AI clean state with a passive surveillance plan and a detailed accredited response plan. The advantages will be in interstate commerce and international trade, with guaranteed immediate assistance upon request and financial and material support with emergency and managerial logistics. There will be 100% indemnity for Newcastle disease (NCD) and highly pathogenic AI (HPAI) and 50% indemnity for all other diseases.

Dr. Smith indicated that a proposal for an active AI surveillance plan for commercial poultry will be approved at the next meeting in 2004. He said that the NPIP flock monitoring criteria will specify only H5 and H7 isolates, will specify which tests to use for monitoring, which labs to perform them, number of birds, and frequency of sampling. AI outbreaks due to H5 and H7 isolates should be reportable by all vets, and there should be educational programs for all licensed vets and producers. As part of a primary response to an outbreak, there should be regular meetings of task forces, establishment of minimum biosecurity measures, educational programs for growers and flock supervisors, and detailed quarantine and handling measures for suspicious cases. Effective measures will also include adequate and effective methods of disposal, as well as frequent testing, and the cleaning and disinfection of live bird markets. Dr. Smith indicated that the use of vaccines may be appropriate in concert with increased biosecurity and an eradication plan.

A representative of the California Department of Agriculture gave an update of the outbreak of exotic Newcastle disease (END) in southern California. He indicated that the problem facing disease prevention was with backyard flock owners, defining the populations at risk, ongoing animal/bird movement, and lack of biosecurity. He indicated that 6,359 premises had been quarantined at that point and that 71% of the affected flocks had been depopulated. For the first commercial flock that tested positive, risk factors were an employee who had attended a cock fight and possibly egg racks and flats. He



indicated that unless all personnel are involved, the cycle of infection cannot be broken. To that end, he recommended offering education and outreach programs for game fowl owners, ranch employees, and egg processing plant personnel, and having a biosecurity person on every ranch. Ranch workers may not understand or care about the disease, but if they are made to understand that it may negatively impact their jobs, it gets their attention. Game bird owners were not fully cooperating with the state, spiriting birds away before they could be quarantined, disobeying quarantines, moving birds too soon after quarantines were lifted, and actually shipping sick birds to derbies and fights in the Philippines. He indicated the need for communication among the different parts of the industry (layers, turkeys, and broilers) and with the game fowl owners in order to work out how to deal with a disease outbreak.

A representative of the California Game Fowl Commission said that the commercial industry tends to underestimate the size and dedication of the game fowl breeders (there are more than 100,000 breeders, with 5 million to 6 million birds). Unlike the commercial poultry industry, they do not have vets to vaccinate and certify their flocks. She indicated that there should be more programs like that at Ohio State University, where veterinarians and extension personnel are working with backyard and game fowl owners. She indicated that one of the things that state and federal regulatory agencies could do is require all commercial, backyard, and game fowl owners to have a permit before they can move birds.

Educational programs started on Thursday with Dr. Ilaria Capua of the Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Venezie giving an overview of the problems encountered in Italy with AI since 1997. She discussed the various outbreaks associated with strains of LPAI (H7N3), mildly pathogenic AI (MPAI – H7N1), and HPAI (H5N2, H7N1) mostly in the northeastern area of Italy. She indicated that probable causes may have been the large number of wild birds on migration, the high numbers of poultry imports into the area, and the high density of poultry in the area. She noted that the industry's organization and structure does not help with biosecurity. The probable use of illicit vaccines by some farmers may have favored the outbreak of MPAI. She indicated that the spread was mostly by movement of staff, vehicles, and birds. Control strategies included heightened biosecurity, serologic monitoring of birds within and outside of infected areas, and the use of an oil immersion vaccine in a Differentiating Infected from Vaccinated Animals (DIVA) strategy. She concluded that properly used vaccines provide a good, effective control. There should be permanent surveillance in risk areas, and contingency plans should be in place before the disease hits.

Dr. Bruce Akey of the Virginia Department of Agriculture summarized the highlights of the outbreak of AI in Virginia. He discussed some of the problems encountered, particularly the initial delay in the effective disposal of the dead birds, which contributed to a rapid spread of the disease. The outbreak investigation ultimately involved 766 people from the

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services, the Virginia Poultry Federation, the U. S. Army, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, the U. S. Health and Human Services, and the U. S. Forest Service. The disease infected a total of 197 farms in Virginia and one in West Virginia, at a cost of about \$130 million to the poultry industry.

Jean-Mari Peltier of the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reviewed the final Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) Rule. He started by saying that EPA recognizes the progress and efforts of the poultry and allied industries in the areas of research funding, training sessions, handbooks, on-farm assessments, and issuing of permits. He discussed some aspects of the rule, indicating that it is effective 60 days after it is published in the Federal Register. He gave some Web sites for education and outreach materials: [www.lpes.org](http://www.lpes.org) (Livestock and Poultry Environmental Stewardship Curriculum), and [www.epa.gov/npdes/cafo/caforule](http://www.epa.gov/npdes/cafo/caforule) (outreach materials).

Dr. Sally Shaver of the U.S. EPA talked about air quality standards for poultry houses, citing provisions in the Clean Air Act and the need for permits when operations are changed.

Agriculture Secretary Dr. Ann Venneman gave an update from USDA. She described some of the trade negotiations under way to ensure that trading partners keep their doors open for American agricultural products, and spoke about the increased funding for agriculture in the president's 2004 budget. Funds have been increased for meat and poultry programs and for food safety activities and inspections. Increased funding will also help communications, testing for microbes, foreign product surveillance, new food safety public education, agricultural protection, security at federal and state laboratories, and vaccine research.

Presentations dealing with animal welfare issues and water recovery and re-use rounded out the educational program for the day.

## **CAFO Rule Implications for West Virginia Poultry Producers**

A meeting of the West Virginia Poultry Association was held at the Moorefield Middle School on April 8, 2003 from 7:00 to 9:45 p.m. Mr. Richard Lewis of Steptoe and Johnson explained the Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) Rule and the pros and cons for the industry. He emphasized the need for the Association to work together in facing the challenges ahead and stressed the need for establishing a legal fund to meet probable environmental lawsuits against individual members. Mr. Dennis Funk, President of the Association indicated that more meetings on the CAFO Rule will be scheduled in the future.



## Poultry Disease Outbreaks in the United States

Certain western states are currently experiencing an outbreak of exotic Newcastle disease (END). After beginning in late September 2002 in backyard game birds, the disease spread to the first commercial layer farm in late December 2002. The virus has since infected several commercial farms in California. The virus has also spread to Nevada and Arizona. Nearly 3.2 million birds have been ordered destroyed at ranches in the three states. At least \$70 million has been spent so far in trying to end the disease with a government task force of 1,300 people. The outbreak has cost the state's egg and poultry industry between \$10 million and \$15 million since October.

Twenty-four countries have imposed bans against poultry products from California. The European Union initially banned imports of all poultry and egg products from the United States, but is now banning products from only those three states. Colombia has halted the shipment of all poultry from the United States, and Canada, China, and Mexico have banned the imports of poultry from California. Some U. S. states have imposed statewide or regional bans.

The virus is highly contagious and fatal for avian species but harmless for humans. It is extremely virulent, and sometimes birds may die without showing any symptoms. Symptoms to look for are respiratory distress, diarrhea, and such neurological signs as twisted necks and lack of coordination. Fatality may be as high as 90%. Unlike avian influenza, the END virus is not usually associated with wild birds. Backyard and fighting birds in Southern California have been implicated in this outbreak. The California Department of Food and Agriculture indicates that about 35% of the birds destroyed have been fighting birds.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture has issued a statewide ban on poultry exhibitions. This ban, which places restrictions on swap meets, feed stores, and the like, applies to all species of poultry. As of mid-March there was speculation that the rate of infection is slowing down (Union-Tribune, March 28, 2003; [www.meatingplace.com](http://www.meatingplace.com) 3/28/03; Watt PoultryUSA March 2003).

APHIS indicates that low-pathogenic avian influenza (LPAI) has been found in a commercial layer flock in Connecticut. On the strength of that news, Japan imposed a ban on all U. S. poultry imports pending assurances from APHIS that everything was being done to contain the disease. When these assurances were given early in March, the nationwide ban was lifted. The ban on poultry products from Connecticut, however, will remain in place for 90 days from the cleaning and disinfection of the affected premises. There are plans in place once USDA approval is given to vaccinate all hens on the farm (Watt PoultryUSA, Feb-March 2003).

## International News

### • **Avian influenza continues to plague poultry industry worldwide**

The Netherlands – Early in March numerous Dutch farms tested positive for AI caused by an H7 virus. This was the country's first outbreak of this disease in 35 years. In an effort to contain the disease, the government started depopulating birds, closed down processing plants, and imposed a transport and export ban on poultry and poultry products. As of March 20, 3.9 million birds on 253 farms had been culled. It is estimated that more than 5 million birds from 400 farms will be culled. Five workers who contracted a mild form of the disease as conjunctivitis have recovered. As a precaution, human influenza vaccines were made available to people in the province of Gelderland who may have been in contact with the virus. Both Germany and Belgium have slaughtered birds believed to have been in contact with birds from the Netherlands. The EU is extending the precautionary measures taken in the Netherlands to its member countries. The EU later declared Belgium to be free of the disease (Foreign Agricultural Service-USDA Gain Report #NL3017; Reuters 3/11/03, 3/13/03; Agra Europe 2/21/03; Watt PoultryUSA).

Hong Kong–Avian influenza reappeared in Hong Kong, forcing the government to destroy chickens that tested positive for the H5 virus. Some of the dead birds that triggered the testing were found on a farm near the Chinese border. In early December, two geese from about 30 that died near a racetrack, tested positive for the H5 AI virus. About 16,000 birds were destroyed after Christmas, and the government halted imports of birds from Mainland China in an effort to clean and disinfect a wholesale market. A family of four traveled to the Fujian province in southeastern China. Three of them later died of the flu. The 9-year-old son tested positive for the H5N1 AI virus. Authorities in the Fujian province indicate that there are no cases of bird flu in the area. Early in January, an outbreak of a pneumonia virus in the Guangdong province caused the death of five people and the hospitalization of hundreds more (Reuters Alertnet 2/6/03; [www.meatingplace.com](http://www.meatingplace.com), 2/24/03, 2/25/03).

### • **Trade issues**

Russia–Russia has indicated that it will cut back on the number of U. S. companies exporting poultry products to Russia beginning June 1. About 500 companies and refrigeration facilities will be checked for compliance of the new Russian-U. S. certificate. Of the 86 companies and facilities inspected in November, only 15 will be included in the list. Russia has said it will be demanding additional safety guarantees from its European poultry suppliers after antibodies to AI were found in imported Dutch hatching eggs ([www.meatingplace.com](http://www.meatingplace.com), Interfax Information Services, B. V., March 24, 2003). In related news, Moscow plans to stop importing poultry meat by 2006.



The United States is considering a retaliation against Russia for meat quotas. Several poultry and meat companies and 20 other agricultural organizations signed a letter to President Bush in February asking him to impose trade retaliations against Russia. Meanwhile Russian traders are said to be stockpiling chicken in anticipation of the May 1 start of the quotas (Watt PoultryUSA 3/17/03).



### Agricultural Security Issues

The USDA's Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) has issued security guidelines to meat processors. The directive can be accessed by logging onto the FSIS Web site ([http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FSISDirectives/5420\\_1.htm](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FSISDirectives/5420_1.htm)). Questions about this directive should be forwarded to the office of Dr. P. S. Derfler, FSIS deputy administrator, Office of Policy, Program and Employee Development at 202-720-9113 (Meatingplace.com 3/20/03).

Jane Jacobs of the North American Meat Processors (NAMP) Association indicates that a man calling himself Bob Miller has contacted plants and identified himself as being affiliated with the Department of Homeland Defense. He claims to be conducting a survey of 500 plants for information on security measures. Establishments contacted should ask for such a request in writing as well as a telephone number at which the individual may be contacted. The NAMP is not aware of any such sanctioned phone surveys. Establishments should contact Jessie Majkowski of the FSIS Office of Food Security and Emergency Preparedness at 202-720-5642 if more information is needed (Meatingplace.com 3/27/03).

### Lawsuits/Complaints

In 2001, the city of Tulsa, Okla filed a lawsuit against six poultry companies and the city of Decatur, Ark., claiming that they had polluted streams and lakes in a watershed supplying Tulsa with water. The lawsuit specified that Tyson Foods, Cobb-Vantress, Peterson Farms, Simmons Foods, Cargill, and George's were polluting the watershed with nitrogen and phosphorus from poultry waste. The city of Decatur was accused of contributing to the pollution by wastewater from a Peterson processing plant. The city of Tulsa asked for reimbursement of \$4 million used to investigate and treat the pollution problem, for punitive damages, and for cleanup of the soils, streams, and lakes in the watershed. A settlement was reached by the parties involved on March 26. As part of the settlement, the city of Decatur will have to upgrade its wastewater treatment plant and take part in remediation (Meatingplace.com. 3/26/03).

Tyson Foods and three of its managers have been acquitted by a federal jury of hiring illegal immigrants from Central America to work in their plants. The verdict indicated that Tyson Foods does not encourage the hiring of illegal aliens. The company attorneys indicated that there was no conspiracy but the managers were simply the victims of an imperfect government system for screening immigrants. A total of 24 out of the initial 36 charges against Tyson Foods were dismissed by the U. S. District judge Allen Edgar (Meatingplace.com. 3/27/03).

The National Chicken Council (NCC), the National Turkey Federation, the National Pork Producers Council, and the American Farm Bureau Federation have filed lawsuits in federal appeals courts concerning the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency's Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations regulations. The NCC indicated that the lawsuit needed to be filed in order to ensure that the industries could participate in far-reaching court decisions. The NCC said the poultry industry adopted a voluntary program of environmental protection or stewardship in 1998, and that as of 2001, more than three-quarters of the nation's chicken farmers have implemented or are in the process of implementing nutrient management plans, well ahead of the schedule set in the plan (Watt PoultryUSA 3/17/03).

Gold'n Plump filed a complaint with the Minnesota News Council against a news story broadcast by Minneapolis, Minn., television station WCCO-TV. The story reported that it is dangerous to eat chickens treated with antibiotics because bacteria from such chickens develop antibiotic resistance, making such drugs ineffective in human treatment. Gold'n Plump indicates that the source of the story was biased, coming from the International Trade and Agricultural Policy, a group that is an advocate of organic food, and a critic of corporate farming and the brand-name food industry. Gold'n Plump said the news story failed to inform the public that proper cooking destroys bacteria, and that there is a withdrawal period for antibiotics before chickens go for slaughter. The Minnesota News Council unanimously agreed that the story was unbalanced, sensationalized, and inaccurate (Watt PoultryUSA 3/10/03).



Buildings on poultry farms in the Shenandoah Valley and West Virginia were damaged by heavy amounts of snow and ice during the storm in the third week of February. Companies affected were Pilgrim's Pride, George's Inc., and Tyson Foods. A total of 63 buildings housing about 1 million birds were damaged (Watt PoultryUSA 2/24/03).

Tyson Foods has announced that Allen's Family Foods will no longer purchase its Berlin, Md. processing plant. Tyson indicates that the plant will remain open and running. About 750 people work at that plant, which ships out about 1 million birds per week (Watt PoultryUSA 1/27/03).

Avilamycin, one of the four feed additives to be banned by the European Union, may be permitted for use in turkey feeds as a coccidiostat pending a review. The other three antibiotics—flavophospholipol, salinomycin sodium, and monensin sodium—are due to be banned in 2006 if not sooner (Agra Europe 2/13/03).



## **Animal Rights Activists Not Happy with Poultry Industry**

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) is at it once again. PETA indicates that the methods used to stun and kill birds do not ensure that they die before they enter scald tanks, and that the industry should use lethal doses of gas instead. Bruce Friedrich, spokesman for PETA said "Chickens

are probably the most abused animals on the face of the planet," adding they are raised in crowded conditions "literally living one on top of each other for their entire miserable lives." Dr. Janice Swanson of Kansas State University cited research on cage space needed for comfortable living. She indicated, however, that advocacy groups have already made up their minds that any type of confinement is bad so no increase in cage sizes or space will please them. Some growers do not agree with the advocacy groups. Bob Patterson, who raises chickens for Tyson Foods, says that Tyson insists on strict standards for their growers. He summed it up by saying that producers have vested interests in their chickens and that treating the birds well makes for a profitable operation (Tahlequah Daily Press, 3/28/03).

## **Vandalism**

Individuals associated with the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) broke into Merial Select Laboratory, in Berlin, Md., in the early hours of Feb. 27, and removed 115 baby chicks from the animal housing units. They indicated that the chicks are being held in isolation and will be moved later to permanent homes to live freely. ALF representatives derided vaccine research conducted at Merial, saying the work does not help animals, but maximizes an animal's commodification in life. Merial Select Laboratory was targeted because it is a client of Huntington Life Sciences (AR-News via United Poultry Concerns, <http://www.upc-online.org>).

Animal-rights activists are suspected of starting a fire at the Rancho Veal packing plant in Petaluma, Calif. The fire was started at night on March 22 causing damage to the tune of \$10,000. A message spray-painted on the back of the building said "Stop the killing." Skylights were smashed and a back door destroyed. No employees were present at the time of the fire or damage. Rancho Veal was vandalized in January 2000, when fire caused damage worth \$250,000. In earlier disturbances at the plant, activists chained themselves to the plant gates or concrete-filled barrels in order to disrupt work at the plant ([www.meatingplace.com](http://www.meatingplace.com) 3/26/03).

*Poultry Voice* is published quarterly to provide those interested in the poultry industry with pertinent production information from industry, academia, and federal and state governments to help ensure economic production of poultry in a manner that sustains the environment. *Poultry Voice* is sponsored by the West Virginia Extension Service.

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WVU Extension Service Poultry Web Site: [www.wvu.edu/~agexten/poultry/index.htm](http://www.wvu.edu/~agexten/poultry/index.htm)



## Upcoming Meetings

- May** 1-4: Georgia Poultry Federation Annual Meeting, Brasstown Valley Resort, Young Harris, Ga. 770-532-0473 (F) 770-532-7543; [Claudette@gapf.org](mailto:Claudette@gapf.org)  
 8-9: National Breeders Roundtable, St. Louis, Mo. [seminar@poultryegg.org](mailto:seminar@poultryegg.org)  
 12-14 : Animal Agriculture Alliance Conference, Arlington, Va. [www.animalagalliance.org](http://www.animalagalliance.org)  
 14-15: Poultry Processor Workshop, Nashville, Tenn., U. S. Poultry & Egg Assoc. 770-493-9401 (F) 770-493-9257; [seminar@poultryegg.org](mailto:seminar@poultryegg.org)  
 19-22: National Egg Quality School, San Antonio Texas. 919-515-5527 (F) 919-515-7070 [ken\\_anderson@ncsu.edu](mailto:ken_anderson@ncsu.edu)  
**June** 6-7: The Poultry Federation's Festival, Arlington Hotel, Hot Springs, Ark. Judy Kimbrell 501-375-8131  
 16-18: Financial Management, Ponte Vedra, Fla., U. S. Poultry & Egg Assoc. 770-493-9401 (F) 770-493-9257; [seminar@poultryegg.org](mailto:seminar@poultryegg.org)  
 17-18: Iowa Turkey Federation Summer Meeting, Des Moines, Iowa. [iaturkey@netins.net](mailto:iaturkey@netins.net)  
 18-22: USAPEEC Annual Meeting and Executive Conference, Grand America Hotel, Salt Lake City, Utah. Kay Phiel, 770-413-0006 (F) 770-413-0007; [kphiel@usapeec.org](mailto:kphiel@usapeec.org)  
 19-21: National Chicken Council's Summer Board of Directors Meeting, The Coeur d'Alene Resort, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Maggie Ernst 202-296-2622; [mernst@chickenusa.org](mailto:mernst@chickenusa.org)  
 20-21: Delmarva Chicken Festival, Dover, Del. 302-856-9037 (F) 302-856-1845; [dpi@dpichicken.com](mailto:dpi@dpichicken.com)  
 25-27: Georgia Egg Assoc. Annual Meeting. St. Simons Island, Ga. [goodeggs@bellsouth.net](mailto:goodeggs@bellsouth.net)  
**July** 6-10: Poultry Science Association's 92<sup>nd</sup> annual meeting, Madison, Wisc. Contact PSA 217-356-3182 (F) 217-398-4119

## **West Virginia Poultry Association Upcoming Events**

- April 14: Bean's Settlement Community Center, Annual spring meeting of the West Virginia Poultry Association, 10 A.M.  
 July 21-26: West Virginia Poultry Festival and Convention, Moorefield. Watch for upcoming calendar of events and times.  
 President's Dinner Speaker Doug Rinker, Past National FFA President and owner of Winchester Equipment Company.

Remember dues are due. Send to West Virginia Poultry Association, Box 612, Moorefield, WV 26836.

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