

TN POULTRY ASSOCIATION

news

letter

Complex and Allied News	13
Regulatory and Legislative	12, 14, 31-33, 41-42
Musings from Tom	36-38
Vaccines	38
Ammonia in Broiler Houses (Czarick)	43-45
Propane Report	45
Allied Member Directory	46-48



Tennessee
Poultry Association

SPRING 2026 ISSUE

PHOTO: CANVA



TPA event season is upon us, and we are so excited to see all of you again soon. We'll kick things off next month with our Service Tech Training Workshop, and we're looking forward to a great turnout. If your company is interested in participating, we still have room for a few more vendors. You can find all the details on page [10](#).

Speaking of exciting things, TPA has recently introduced two new programs that we believe will help us further our mission of nurturing the next generation of poultry industry leaders.

The first-ever Service Tech of the Year Award will be announced on April 15 during the Service Tech Workshop. This new recognition highlights the important work your service techs do, and we are proud to present the winner with a \$500 cash prize generously sponsored by Poultry Guard.

We're also excited to launch our new Emerging Leaders Program. This initiative was first suggested by TPA board member David Tallent back in October, and the board quickly agreed that it was something our association needed to pursue. The goal of this program is to help member companies grow and retain talented employees who show strong potential for long-term careers in the poultry industry. Through this effort, participants will gain exposure to all aspects of poultry production.

We can't wait to see how the first class of Emerging Leaders progresses and the impact they will have on the future of our industry.

See y'all soon!

Tracy



VISION STATEMENT

The Tennessee Poultry Association (TPA) is dedicated to advancing and strengthening the integrated broiler/breeder industry in Tennessee and beyond. Our mission is to foster the growth and sustainability of the poultry sector through a comprehensive approach that encompasses education, policy advocacy, and public relations. We represent poultry stakeholders - including growers, integrators, genetics companies, and allied poultry companies - in legislative matters, advocating for their best interests. Moreover, TPA actively nurtures the next generation of poultry industry leaders by supporting higher education programs and youth initiatives. Through scholarships and legislative advocacy, we empower students pursuing poultry-related degrees and provide support to poultry growers and their families.

PROTECTING THE BACKBONE OF THE POULTRY INDUSTRY



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THE ISSUE:



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AG LIGHTING INNOVATIONS - 5

GEORGIA POULTRY - 24

POULTRY GUARD - 27

BIG DUTCHMAN - 20

GREEN WAVE SOLAR - 16

PROXY-CLEAN PRODUCTS - 41

BOEHRINGER INGELHEIM - 35

INNOVATIVE POULTRY PRODUCTS - 17, 26

RELIABLE POULTRY - 42

D & F EQUIPMENT SALES - 7

LEE, HILL, AND JOHNSON INSURORS - 3

RIVER VALLEY AG CREDIT - 4

DIVERSIFIED AG - 9

LIVE OAK BANK - 29

SOUTHLAND ORGANICS - 25

FARM CREDIT MID-AMERICA - 33

LUBING SYSTEMS - 30

THOMPSON GAS - 45

FIRST FINANCIAL BANK - 11

WEST TN COALITION COORD. - 19

WANT TO ADVERTISE WITH TPA? REACH OUT TO JOCELYNN@TNPOULTRY.ORG FOR MORE INFORMATION!

TRACY RAFFERTY

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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tracy@tnpoultry.org

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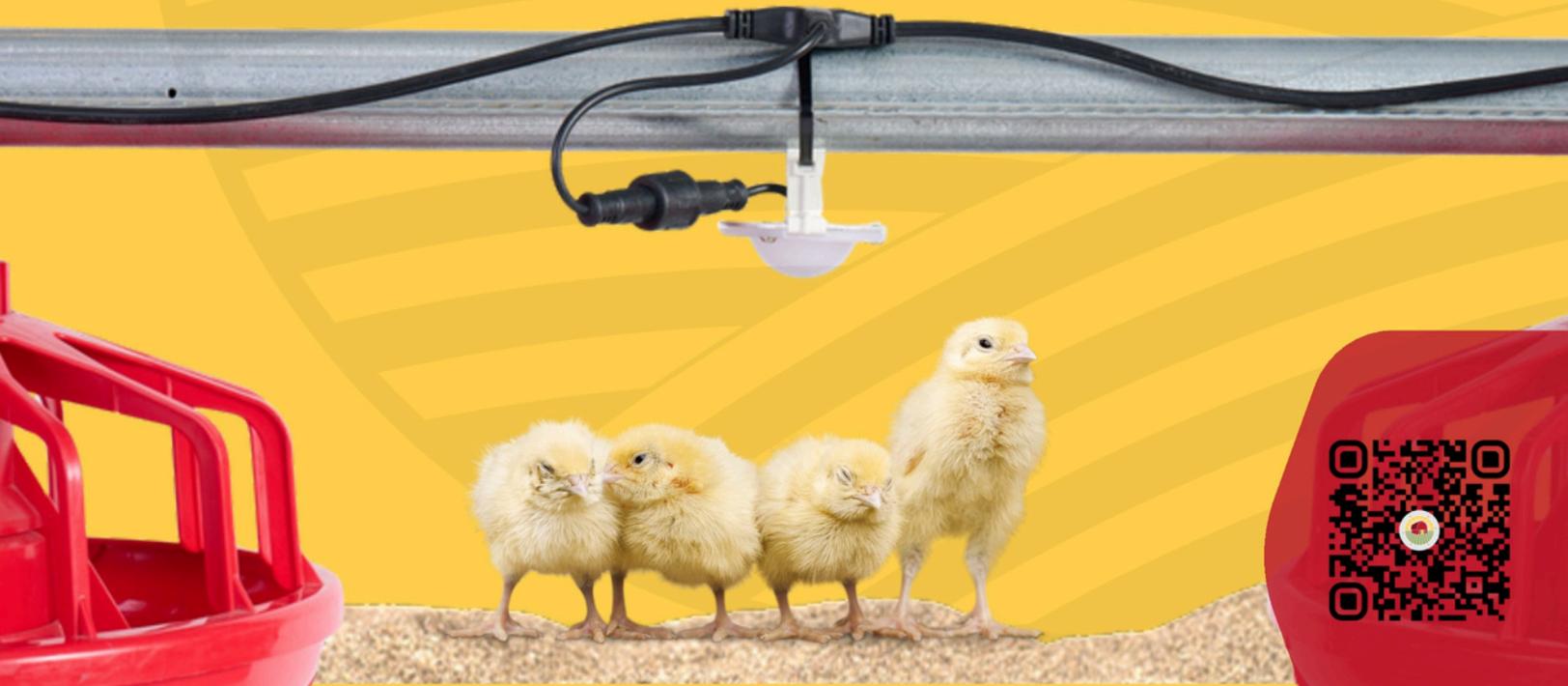




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Noticed anything new about your invoices?

Thanks to all of you, TPA has grown to the point where we needed a little extra help managing accounts payable and receivable. Lida Phengmany has graciously stepped in to help us a few hours a week. Since she has a full-time career with Tyson Foods, you'll most likely receive your invoices in the late afternoon or evening, but otherwise, everything should look and work just the same.

Jocelynn and I are thrilled!!!



Lida Phengmany

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NOT A CURRENT MEMBER OF TPA?

Contact Jocelynn at (270) 290-0193 or jocelynn@tnpoultry.org for more information about member benefits

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2026 EVENTS CALENDAR

16
MARCH

TPA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION DEADLINE
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19-20
MARCH

USPOULTRY FEED MILL MANAGEMENT SEMINAR
EMBASSY SUITES BY HILTON - NASHVILLE, TN

15
APRIL

TPA SERVICE TECH WORKSHOP
FARM BUREAU EXPO CENTER - LEBANON, TN

19
MAY

TPA SCHOLARSHIP FUNDRAISER GOLF SCRAMBLE
HERMITAGE GOLF COURSE - OLD HICKORY, TN

20
MAY

TPA SCHOLARSHIP FUNDRAISER SPORTING CLAYS SHOOT
CROSS CREEK CLAYS - PALMYRA, TN

31-1
JULY - AUGUST

TPA ANNUAL MEETING & SUMMER GETAWAY
GAYLORD OPRYLAND RESORT - NASHVILLE, TN

22 & 24
SEPTEMBER

TPA GROWER MEETINGS
MARTIN, TN & CLEVELAND, TN

The New Pyramid



NEW DIETARY GUIDELINES REAFFIRM CHICKEN'S ROLE IN A HEALTHY DIET

January 9, 2026 at NCCWashingtonReport.com
by Tom Super

The 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, released Wednesday, put a key emphasis on prioritizing high-quality, nutrient-dense protein foods, like chicken, as part of a healthy dietary pattern across all stages of life. The Guidelines also specifically recommend consuming a variety of protein foods from animal sources, including poultry. [Click here for full article](#)



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SERVICE TECH WORKSHOP



 APRIL 15TH, 2026  9:00 AM CT

 FARM BUREAU EXPO CENTER – LEBANON, TN

TOPICS & SPEAKERS

- 🐔 Litter Management – Dr. Joey Bray, *Jones-Hamilton*
- 🐔 Egg Quality – Dusty Cagle, *Cobb-Vantress*
- 🐔 Wildlife Biosecurity Assessments – Blaine Hyle, *USDA-APHIS*
- 🐔 Lunch – Cracker Barrel
- 🐔 Composting – Ray Hilburn, *Alabama Poultry & Egg Association*
- 🐔 Effective Communication Strategies – Jeremy Martin, *Aviagen*



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2ND HALF OF THE 114TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY CONVENES

Submitted February 24, 2026 by Shelby Vannoy, Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation

This January marked lawmaker's return to complete the second half of the 114th General Assembly. With an election drawing near, lawmakers will work hastily to complete their business and head back to the district for campaign season. Farm Bureau encourages all stakeholders and supporters to follow along with the happenings on the hill. To receive the weekly legislative alerts, visit <https://tnfarmbureau.org/action-center>. To receive Action Alerts requests on your phone, text "policy" to 931-388-7872.

Legislation to Watch

SB2558 | HB2517 – Clarifying the Authority of the State Vet – Clarifies the state veterinarian can, only in instances of a disease outbreak as recognized by USDA APHIS' National List of Reportable Animal Diseases, order testing and vaccinations. Otherwise, authority cannot be exerted. Stakeholders from the agriculture industry believe this is already to be standard operating procedure from the office of the state veterinarian. However, this seeks to codify such practice to prevent the potential for future abuse.

*Senate Status: Calendared in Senate Energy, Agriculture and Natural Resources 2/25/26
House Status: Referred to Agriculture and Natural Resources Subcommittee

SB2026 | HB2152 – State Based Indemnity Program – Allows the Department of Agriculture with the authority to promulgate rules and regulations to establish procedures for the payment of indemnities for animals destroyed for purposes of animal health and disease mitigation. The program is only subject to the availability of funds, of which none have been appropriated.

*Senate Status: Referred to Finance, Ways and Means Committee
House Status: Referred to House Agriculture and Natural Resources Subcommittee

SB568 | HB1155 – Banning Cell Cultured Food Products – Bans a person from selling, distributing, or importing for sale or distribution cell cultured products. Limits commerce and competition in the marketplace for protein producers.

*Senate Status: Referred to Senate Health and Welfare Committee
House Status: Deferred to Special Calendar in House Agriculture and Natural Resources Subcommittee

*Indicates status as of February 24, 2026

Yes on 2 Initiative Launches Statewide

A coalition that includes the Tennessee Farm Bureau, Tennessee Realtors, and Tennessee Chamber of Commerce officially announced this week the launch of Yes on 2, the single measure committee to pass a constitutional amendment banning a state property tax. *Governor Bill Lee* will serve as the statewide chair for the effort. A recent poll commissioned by Yes on 2 showed that 64% of Tennessee voters support banning a state property tax. (continued on page [14](#))

News from our **ALLIED MEMBERS & COMPLEXES**

WANT TO BE FEATURED? PLEASE SEND YOUR SUBMISSIONS TO JOCELYNN@TNPoultry.ORG BY **MAY 29TH** TO BE INCLUDED IN THE SUMMER ISSUE

Cobb-Vantress LLC has unveiled the Cobb800™, a next-generation broiler breeder designed for high-output, scale-driven operations worldwide.
[Click here for full article](#)



Aviagen Appoints **Clara Goldman** as Global Director of Export, Logistics & Trade Compliance

Cole Hendrix has been named the new Technical Sales Representative with Murfreesboro Container Commercial Team at **International Paper**.



D & F Equipment Sales, Inc., has announced **Kevin Parnell** as the Vice President of Operations.
[Click here for full article](#)



Shawn Hawkins Named to Lead Biosystems Engineering and Soil Science Department at **UTIA**

For the sixth year in a row, the Top Employers Institute has recognized **Boehringer Ingelheim** as a "Global Top Employer." This year's certification underpins the company's commitment to creating an attractive work environment, with employee well-being at its core.
[Click here for full article](#)

Georgia Poultry Equipment Company announces the launch of its AirStorm Pro™ Fan line, engineered to deliver consistent airflow in the demanding environments of modern poultry production.

CONNECT WITH US!



OFFICE:

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Tennessee does not currently have a state property tax; only local governments currently impose property taxes. However, state law permits the collection of a state property tax, and the state did so until 1949. The 114th General Assembly completed the second of the three hurdles to institute a Constitutional Amendment to prohibit a statewide property tax. This November, it will be up to Tennessee voters to do their part! Passage of Amendment 2 would prohibit the legislature from enacting a state property tax.

For more information about Yes on 2, please visit <https://www.tnyeson2.com>.

I Farm I Vote

As election season draws near, I Farm I Vote is a great way to stay connected and get resources to spread the word about voter participation. A agriculture industry-wide initiative, I Farm I Vote seeks to promote the rural vote by providing election information, branding materials and tools to use in your local community.

For more information on I Farm I Vote, visit ifarmivote.com or contact Shelby Vannoy, svannoy@tfbf.com.



USDA LAUNCHES 'ONE FARMER, ONE FILE' INITIATIVE TO BETTER SUPPORT FARMERS

February 26, 2026 at [USDA.gov](https://www.usda.gov)

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke L. Rollins announced the “One Farmer, One File” modernization, another action putting Farmers First with sweeping technological improvements at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Through “One Farmer, One File,” USDA’s mission is to create a single, streamlined record that follows the farmer – no matter where they go in the USDA system. [Click here for full article](#)

IPPE 2026



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SOLAR CUTS POULTRY COSTS WITH SITE-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

January 30, 2026 at WattAgNet.com by Roy Graber

Poultry producers can reduce Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions while capturing operational cost savings by implementing solar technology with site-specific best practices, according to a sustainability engineer speaking at the 2026 International Production & Processing Expo (IPPE).

Mark Pitman, sustainability engineer for Pitman Family Farms, told attendees of the IPPE Animal Agriculture Sustainability Summit 27 that solar energy will dominate global power production as costs continue declining, creating opportunities for producers facing government and customer sustainability mandates. [Click here for full article](#)



Scholarship Applications close March 16th!

Go to tnpoultry.org > Click the "Awards Program" tab > Click which scholarship you want to apply for & get started!

EVERY BIRD COUNTS: THE VALUE OF INDIVIDUAL TRACKING IN POULTRY

October 7, 2025 at [ModernPoultry.Media](https://www.modernpoultrymedia.com) by Allison Pullin

Poultry management often focuses on flock-level data – e.g., livability, egg production, water use, etc. – or individual bird data that is inferred from averages across the flock – e.g., average daily gain, estimated feed intake/bird, average body weight, etc. Other livestock industries have implemented individual animal identification methods, such as ear tags or wearable technology, to provide individualized care and make genetic decisions. In poultry, it may not be economically or logistically feasible to implement individual identification for all birds in a flock due to larger group sizes, shorter life spans, and lower economic value per animal compared to other livestock industries. Nevertheless, tracking a portion of individual animals in research and commercial poultry flocks offers insight to improve management practices and animal welfare. [Click here for full article](#)

THE FIVE DOMAINS: USING KEY WELFARE INDICATORS TO DRIVE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN ANIMAL WELFARE OUTCOMES

December 8, 2025 at [ModernPoultry.Media](https://www.modernpoultrymedia.com) by Ken Opengart

The Five Domains provides an actionable framework to better assess and communicate about the dynamic continuum of animal welfare. A quick review of the Five Domains can be found in my article published earlier this year in Modern Poultry and is also illustrated in the graphic below. [Click here for full article](#)



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PRODUCTS THAT MAKE A POULTRY FARMER SMILE

SYNERGIES KEY TO EFFECTIVE USE OF ANTIBIOTIC ALTERNATIVES IN BROILER PRODUCTION

December 2, 2025 at [ModernPoultry.Media](#)

Alternatives to antibiotic growth promoters (AGPs) can maintain broiler performance. But replacing antibiotics is not a simple matter of like-for-like replacements, according to Doug Korver, PhD, professor of poultry nutrition at the University of Alberta. [Click here for full article](#)

LAMENESS IN BROILERS RAISES WELFARE, HEALTH AND ECONOMIC CONCERNS

December 3, 2025 at [ModernPoultry.Media](#)

Bone and leg health issues are among the top five common concerns for broilers, noted Gigi Lin, DVM, DACPV, adding that "Lameness can indicate not only a potential disease issue but is a welfare and economic concern." [Click here for full article](#)

BIOSURVEILLANCE COULD PREDICT HPAI, AMPV IN POULTRY

January 21, 2026 at [WattAgNet.com](#) by Elizabeth Doughman

A biosurveillance platform adapted from COVID-19 wastewater monitoring could help poultry producers detect disease outbreaks weeks before symptoms appear, potentially offering early warning for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), avian metapneumovirus (aMPV) and other health challenges. [Click here for full article](#)

AAAP: PATHOGENIC CASTELLANIELLA IN BROILER BREEDERS

February 11, 2026 at [ThePoultrySite.com](#) by Chris Wright

Is *Castellaniella ginsengisoli* an emerging pathogen in chickens? Since 2018, uncommon bacterial infections have been identified in broiler breeders at the Poultry Diagnostic and Research Center (PDRC), University of Georgia, USA. Birds from 22 cases exhibited increased mortality, lameness, and swollen wattles, resembling fowl cholera. However, gene sequencing revealed 99% homology with *Castellaniella* spp., suggesting a different causative agent. [Click here for full article](#)



It's good to see a sizable amount of dirt being moved for the new poultry houses being built at UT's Middle Tennessee Research and Education Center in Spring Hill.

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- 3/5** UTC Social Work Field Fair, *Chattanooga*
- 3/14** Kenton Spring Fling Arts & Crafts Market, *Kenton*
- 3/20** Old Crow Medicine Show Concert, *Knoxville*
- 3/21** 64th Annual Wearin' of the Green, *Erin*
- 3/21** Rhea County Family Fun Fair, *Evensville*
- 4/4** 6th Annual Banana Pudding Festival, *Monterey*
- 4/18** Crossville Strawberry Festival
- 4/25-4/26** Main Street Festival, *Franklin*
- 4/25** Tennessee Apple Festival, *Murfreesboro*



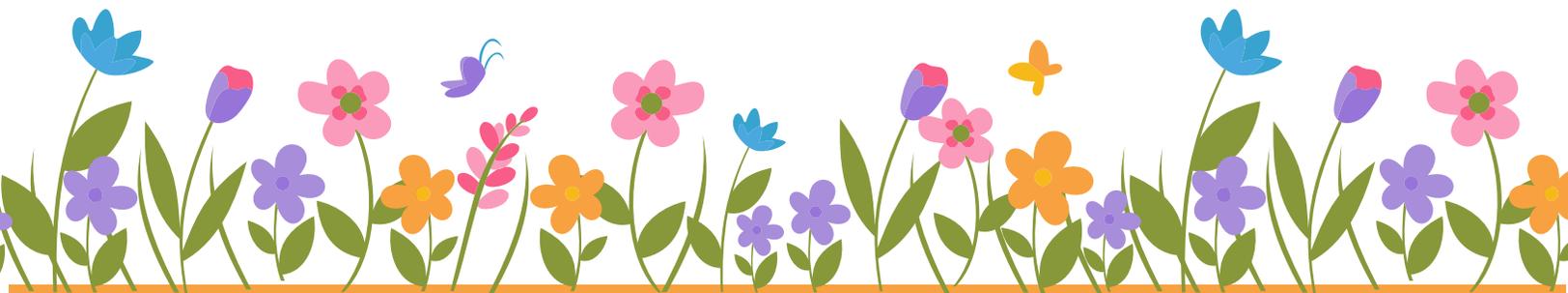
| VOICES FOR A SAFER TENNESSEE



POULTRY BARN RODENTS MIGHT COST YOU MORE THAN YOU REALIZE

January 21, 2026 at WattAgNet.com by Roy Graber

When you have rodents in your poultry barns, the financial costs to your poultry operation could be more significant than you might realize. [Click here for full article](#)





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BOOTH #921

PROTECTING YOUR COMMERCIAL POULTRY INVESTMENT

January 6, 2026 at PoultryProducer.com by Jim

If you own a farm and produce poultry commercially, chances are you have a substantial financial investment in your operation—not to mention the sweat equity you’ve put in over the years. Modern poultry houses are equipped with safety features, alarms and backup systems that can alert you to problems whether you are on the farm or away, and even older houses still provide helpful protections when issues arise. Beyond technology, the house itself is an important part of the system, with mechanical features and structural components that help ensure everything runs smoothly. [Click here for full article](#)

CELEBRATE THE SAVIOR

HE IS RISEN

HAPPY EASTER FROM TPA



HUNDREDS OF CANADA GOOSE DEATHS IN MANITOBA LEAVE WILDLIFE EXPERTS PERPLEXED

December 11, 2025 at [CanadianPoultryMag.com](https://canadianpoultrymag.com) by Brittany Hobson

Infectious disease and wildlife experts are scratching their heads at the recent discoveries of mass Canada goose deaths in southern Manitoba, with some communities reporting carcasses found frozen in waterways. [Click here for full article](#)

WHY IS VACCINATING AGAINST AVIAN FLU STILL SUCH AN ISSUE?

December 12, 2025 at [WattAgNet.com](https://wattagnet.com) by Benjamín Ruiz

Winter is here in the Northern Hemisphere - and avian flu is lying in wait. Researchers at Utrecht University experts in animal diseases and advisors to the Dutch government, have issued a strong warning: the current strategy for dealing with avian influenza is outdated, and the situation in the country is "serious." [Click here for full article](#)

RETHINKING H5N1 AND POULTRY TRADE: SCIENCE OVER PRECAUTION

January 7, 2026 At [WattAgNet.com](https://wattagnet.com) by Ricardo Santin

While the avian influenza virus may persist in poultry meat, evidence from numerous intergovernmental bodies has shown that imported meat inspected by a recognized veterinary service poses almost zero risk to industrial poultry production. [Click here for full article](#)

FAR-UVC LIGHT COULD STOP SPREAD OF HPAI IN POULTRY

February 17, 2026 at [WattAgNet.com](https://wattagnet.com) by Elizabeth Doughman

Research into an antiviral technology called far-ultraviolet-C light (UVC) light used to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in people will determine if it could help halt the transmission of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in poultry barns. [Click here for full article](#)

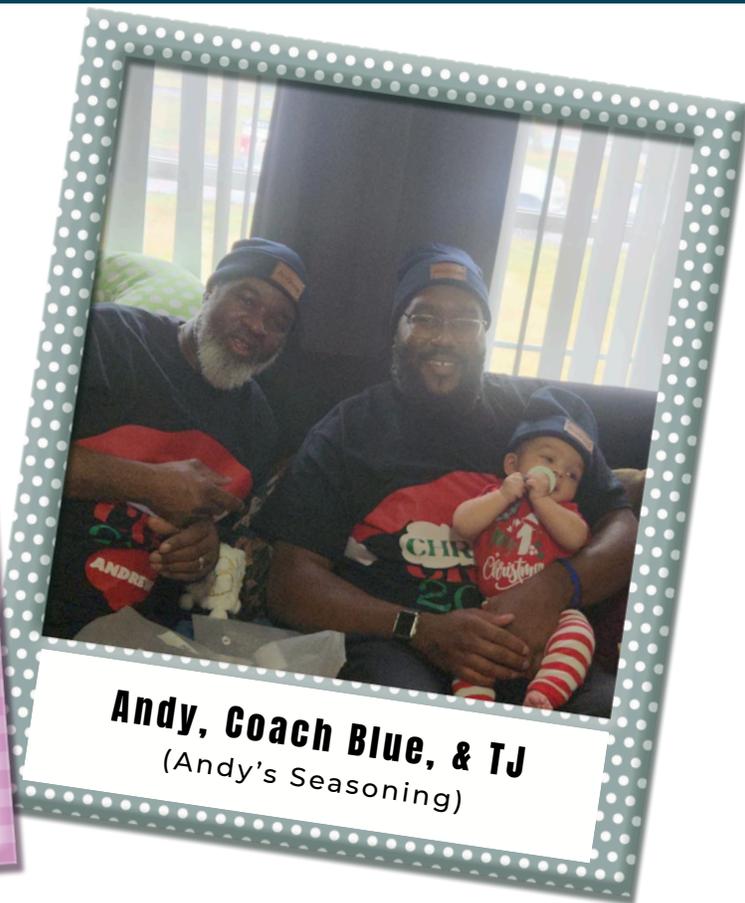
US UNIVERSITY RESEARCHER RECEIVES \$1.9 MILLION FROM USDA-APHIS TO CREATE NEW BIRD FLU VACCINE

February 25, 2026 at [EFeedLink.com](https://efeedlink.com)

A University of Missouri (MU) researcher has received a US\$1.9 million federal grant to develop a new vaccine aimed at curbing highly pathogenic avian influenza, a virus that has driven economic losses for farmers and contributed to rising egg prices. The funding was awarded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. It will support a three-year project through February 2029 led by Wenjun Ma, a professor at the MU School of Medicine and College of Veterinary Medicine. [Click here for full article](#)



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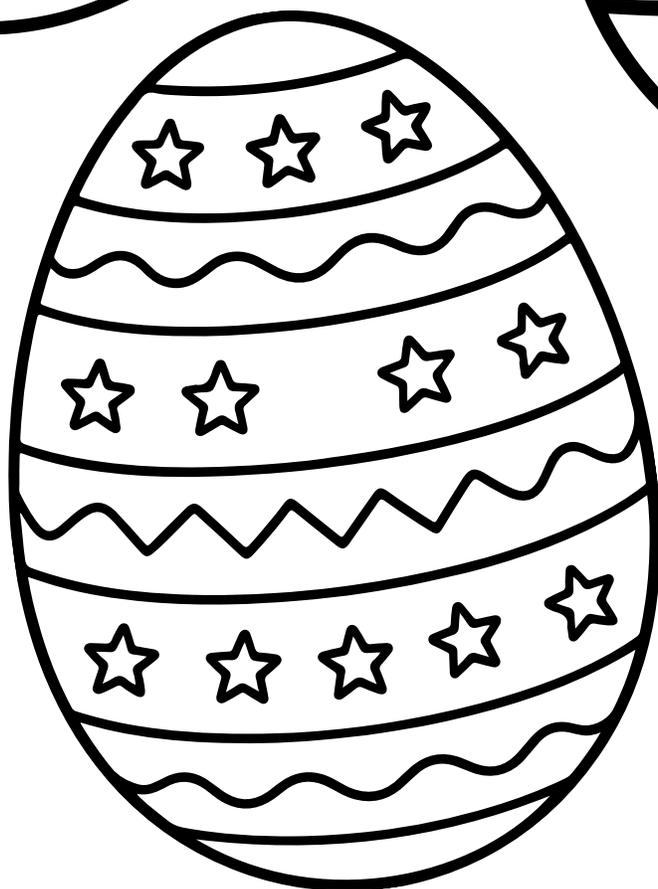
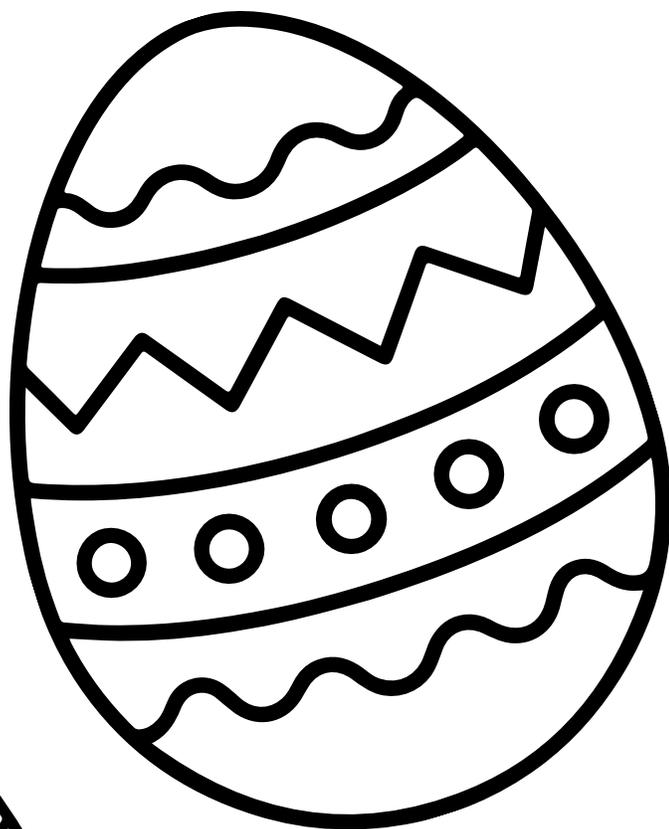
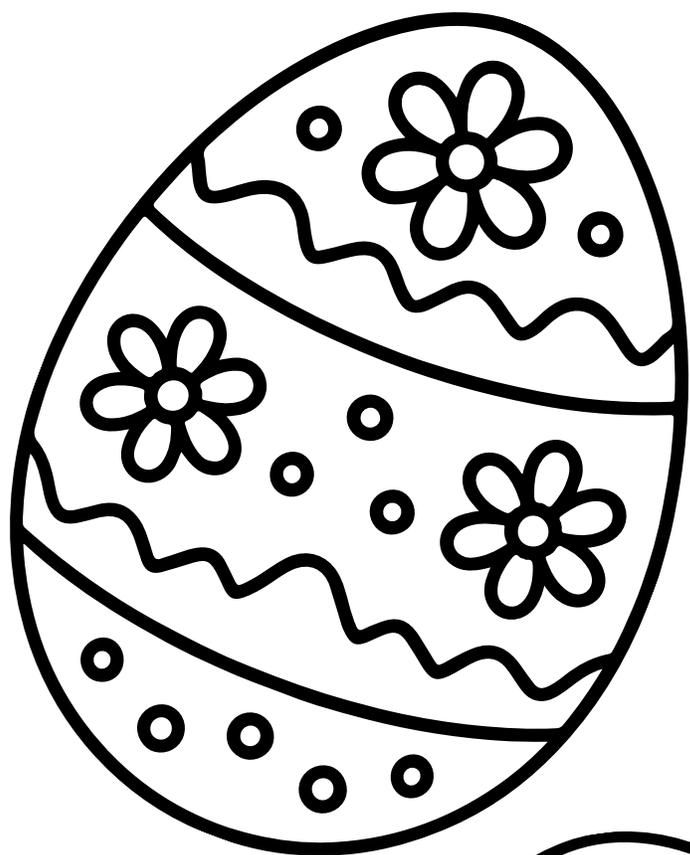
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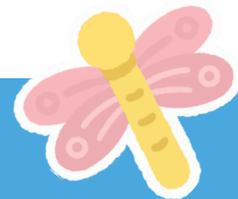
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AI-FORWARD CHICK SORTING COULD SIMPLIFY HATCHERY OPERATIONS

January 6, 2026 at [WattAgNet.com](https://www.wattagnet.com) by Elizabeth Doughman

Artificial intelligence (AI)-powered gender identification technology uses computer vision to automatically identify and sort feather-sexable birds — approximately 80% of commercial broilers — at speeds up to 160,000 birds per hour. [Click here for full article](#)



WHAT YOUR WATERLINES HIDE

January 8, 2026 at [CanadianPoultryMag.com](https://www.canadianpoultrymag.com) by Dr. Gigi Lin

Producers often express concern about waterline cleanliness and whether bacteria are hiding inside and affecting bird health and performance. Many are also unsure where to start or what kind of testing to do. Most are familiar with traditional water-quality testing, where water samples are collected from the source and various points along waterlines and submitted for analysis of minerals, pH or total coliforms. [Click here for full article](#)

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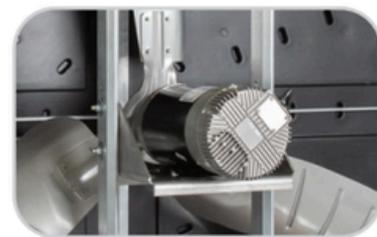


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WHY EGG SIZE, SHELL QUALITY AND LAYING RATE SHIFT IN OLDER FLOCKS

February 16, 2026 at ThePoultrySite.com by Sarah Mikesell

Dr. Jose Charal, director of poultry technical sales at ADM Animal Nutrition, was recently interviewed by The Poultry Site's Sarah Mikesell at the 2026 International Production & Processing Expo to discuss why egg size, shell quality and laying rate shift in older flocks. [Click here for full article](#)

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RESEARCHERS EVALUATE THE EFFECTS OF COMBINED SPRINKLER AND COOL CELL COOLING ON BROILER PERFORMANCE AND WATER USE

February 12, 2026 at USPoultry.org by Hannah Keck

Researchers from Mississippi State University evaluated a combined evaporative cooling and sprinkler system (ECSS) as an alternative to conventional evaporative cooling (EC) for managing heat stress in commercial broiler production. Two commercial-sized broiler houses were studied across two summer flocks to assess impacts on in-house environment, water use, bird performance and welfare. [Click here for full article](#)

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PRODUCTS THAT MAKE A POULTRY FARMER SMILE

USPOULTRY RELEASES UPDATED REPORT OF ANTIBIOTIC STEWARDSHIP WITHIN US POULTRY PRODUCTION

December 16, 2025 at USPoultry.org by Gwen Venable and Hannah Keck

Updated research, supported by the U.S. Poultry & Egg Association and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, was released today quantifying the U.S. poultry industry's on-farm antibiotic use. The updated report shows continued improved antibiotic stewardship and commitment to disease prevention within poultry production. As part of its commitment to a transparent and sustainable food supply, the poultry industry works to balance the responsible use of antibiotics considered "medically important" to human health with the need to maintain healthy poultry flocks. [Click here for full article](#)

THE PROMISE OF 'POULTRY-PONICS'

December 14, 2025 at MeatingPlace.com by Lisa Keefe

A broiler chick requires a gallon of water for every pound he gains toward market weight. Multiply that by nearly 10 billion birds produced in the US each year, and the poultry industry has a water management issue. [Click here for full article](#)

POULTRY FAT FUELS UNITED AIRLINES PUSH FOR SUSTAINABILITY

December 31, 2025 at WattAgNet.com by Elizabeth Doughman

United Airlines is betting on waste fats from poultry production to help achieve its ambitious climate targets, with sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) emerging as a critical tool in the carrier's decarbonization strategy. [Click here for full article](#)



ARE WE MOVING TOWARDS CONSUMER ACCEPTANCE OF GENETIC MODIFICATION?

January 20, 2026 at [Egg-News.com](https://www.egg-news.com) by Simon M. Shane

Circana recently published the results of a consumer survey relating to acceptance of pork from genetically modified hogs. The study comprised 5,000 subjects from eight industrialized nations with a questionably high response rate of 96 percent. In this case, consumers were requested to provide an opinion as to whether they would purchase pork from genetically modified hogs, thereby reducing potential antibiotic use. Overwhelmingly (94 percent) of consumers were willing to purchase pork from genetically modified hogs with a proviso that the process would offer tangible benefits to consumers and that appropriate transparency including packaging would be maintained. This said, interpretation of survey results are highly dependent on the framing of questions and selection of participants. [Click here for full article](#)



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NITROGEN DEPOPULATION COULD HELP IMPROVE POULTRY WELFARE

January 27, 2026 at WattAgNet.com by Meredith Dawson

Whole-house nitrogen gas depopulation could be an effective depopulation method for poultry producers to help improve bird welfare.

The method works by injecting liquid nitrogen, which expands nearly 650 times in volume when vaporized, through a distribution system, explained Jeff Hill, President of Livestock Welfare Strategies, during the 2026 United Egg Producers January Board and Committee Meetings, held in conjunction with the 2026 International Production and Processing Expo.

[Click here for full article](#)

COBB COLLABORATES WITH INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO IDENTIFY METHODS OF PROTECTING GENETIC MATERIAL THAT IS VITAL TO PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

February 13, 2026 at PoultryProducer.com by Jim



Cobb Research and Development team member, Dr. Rachel Hawken, recently published work completed in collaboration with researchers at Wageningen University, The National Centre for Genetic Resources of the Netherlands, the National Centre for Biodiversity and Gene Conservation of Hungary, Eindhoven University of Technology and The National Institute of Agricultural and Food Research and Technology of Spain. This international team aimed to tackle one of the key bottlenecks in poultry genetics and conservation: the challenge of reliably freezing and recovering fertile chicken semen. While many livestock species can use frozen semen for breeding, chickens remain a major exception. [Click here for full article](#)

NEW USPOULTRY TRAINING EMPOWERS DRIVER MANAGERS TO LEAD SAFER FLEET OPERATIONS

February 16, 2026 at USPoultry.org by Hannah Keck

In industries like poultry, where commercial motor vehicle (CMV) drivers are essential to daily operations, driver safety is not optional – it is a shared responsibility. Recognizing this, USPOULTRY has developed a comprehensive Driver Manager Foundational Knowledge course designed specifically for managers and supervisors responsible for overseeing CMV drivers.

[Click here for full article](#)



ORIGIN MATTERS: HOW U.S. SOYBEAN MEAL CONSISTENCY SHAPES BROILER PERFORMANCE

March 4, 2026 at ThePoultrySite.com

In today's broiler industry, performance expectations have never been higher. Advances in genetics, housing and health management continue to push the boundaries of what birds can achieve, placing nutrition firmly at the center of flock success.

Among those ingredients, soybean meal plays a foundational role in modern poultry diets. It supplies essential amino acids and energy that allow birds to reach their genetic potential, making its consistency and digestibility critical to overall production outcomes. However, not all soybean meal is high quality and sustainable – country of origin does matter. [Click here for full article](#)



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LABOR, SKILLS AND THE FUTURE OF POULTRY PRODUCTION

March 1, 2026 at WattAgNet.com by Nicolò Cinotti

Labor has become a strategic challenge for the poultry meat industry. What was once considered an operational concern has transformed into a systemic issue affecting competitiveness, compliance and resilience. [Click here for full article](#)



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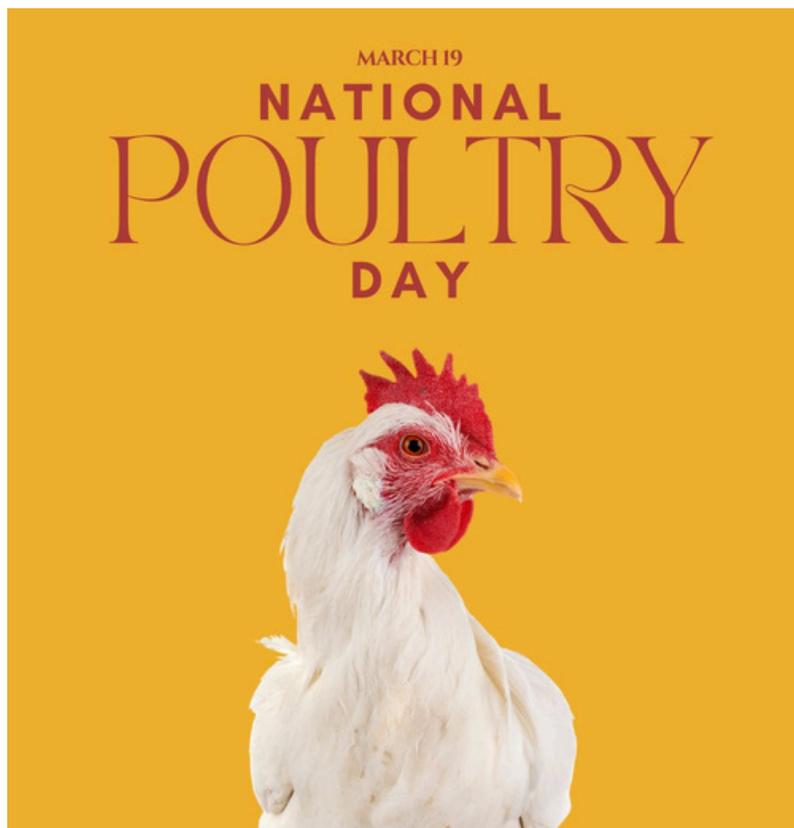
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POULTRY PROCESSING SHIFTS TO CHEMICAL-FREE CLEANING

January 30, 2026 at WattAgNet.com by Meredith Dawson

Poultry processors are facing increasingly strict contamination and food safety standards. However, new technologies are helping producers meet those requirements while reducing water consumption and chemical usage. [Click here for full article](#)



NCC PRAISES USDA ANNOUNCEMENT UPDATING OUTDATED CHICKEN PROCESSING REGULATIONS

February 17, 2026 at NationalChickenCouncil.com by Tom Super

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins today announced new actions to reduce burdens on U.S. chicken processing facilities, allowing for greater efficiency while maintaining food safety standards. The proposed rule would eliminate outdated administrative requirements that have slowed production and added unnecessary costs for American producers.

"I want to thank Secretary Rollins and the Trump administration for adhering to science-based principles and following almost 30 years of experience, studies and data on increased line speeds in chicken processing plants," said National Chicken Council President Harrison Kircher. "The current patchwork approach has created significant uncertainty for companies and has put our members at a disadvantage globally, where other countries operate at faster speeds. We appreciate the administration's pro-business approach and for helping to increase the global competitiveness of America's chicken producers. We look forward to providing input as the rulemaking process begins."

Background

A pilot program using almost two dozen chicken processing plants was initiated under the Clinton administration allowing line speeds of up to 175 birds per minute (bpm), up from 140bpm. It is important to note that the part of the processing line (evisceration) that deals with the speed increase is almost entirely automated. This modernized system has been studied, debated, and reviewed in depth for two and a half decades to assure its effectiveness in further modernizing chicken inspection while improving food safety and protecting workers. Research has confirmed that higher evisceration line speeds in chicken processing plants do not lead to increased food safety risks.

While the industry has been safely increasing line speeds over the past 30 years, the poultry industry's injury and illness rate has fallen 90 percent, according to the most recent data from the U.S. Department of Labor, demonstrating the tremendous advancements the industry has made in improving safety for its workforce.

Furthermore, last January, FSIS issued a study that found that the risk of injuries among workers at poultry processing plants was not influenced by evisceration line speed.

Any individual plant's line speeds are based on many factors, including a plant being able to maintain process control, producing safe food, keeping workers safe, and staffing considerations. If a plant determines that one of these factors calls for slowing down the line, the plant will do so. USDA maintains the regulatory authority to slow down or stop a production line in poultry processing plants if deemed unsafe.

Chicken processing plants in Canada, Belgium, Germany, Brazil and Argentina, among others, all operate at line speeds of 200+ bpm, using the same equipment, putting the U.S. at a competitive disadvantage in the global marketplace. 

US SENATORS PUSH USDA FOR URGENT ACTION ON BIRD FLU VACCINE

December 11, 2025 at [Reuters.com](#) by Leah Douglas

A bipartisan group of U.S. senators this week urged the administration of President Donald Trump to finalize a science-based plan for developing a bird flu vaccine for livestock, according to a letter seen by Reuters. [Click here for full article](#)

EPA RESTORES RENDERING TO NATIONAL WASTED FOOD SCALE

December 19, 2025 at [FeedStrategy.com](#)

The North American Renderers Association (NARA) applauded the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for restoring rendering to the agency's Wasted Food Scale after the process was removed without explanation in 2023, ending its three-decade inclusion in EPA's food recovery hierarchy. [Click here for full article](#)

NCC OFFERS ALTERNATIVE PARAMETERS FOR SALMONELLA PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

January 16, 2026 at [NCCWashingtonReport.com](#) by Tom Super

NCC this week participated in a Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) public meeting to discuss practical strategies for reducing Salmonella illnesses attributed to poultry products. The meeting focused on stakeholder input on how to address Salmonella through better use of data, alternative performance standard parameters, and policy options that reflect both public health goals and industry realities, especially for small and very small producers. [Click here for full article](#)

USDA'S SECRETARY VADEN ASSAILS PROP 12 AS 'INTERNAL PROTECTIONISM'

January 29, 2026 at [MeatingPlace.com](#) by Peter Voskamp

USDA Deputy Secretary Stephen Vaden this week denounced California's Prop 12 as "internal protectionism" and vowed that the Trump would continue its effort to overturn the California law. [Click here for full article](#)

FSIS OPENS COMMENT PERIOD FOR LINE SPEED PROPOSALS

February 23, 2026 at [FeedStuffs.com](#)

The USDA FSIS announced the publication of two proposed rules that would update regulatory requirements for poultry and swine establishments operating under modern slaughter inspection systems. The proposed updates are intended to provide more flexibility for establishments using these systems while maintaining all existing food safety protections and federal inspection activities. [Click here for full article](#)

MEAT, POULTRY INDUSTRY LAUDS INITIAL PASSAGE OF FARM BILL 2.0

March 5, 2026 at [MeatPoultry.com](#) by Rachel Oatman

On March 5, the House Agriculture Committee passed Chairman Glenn Thompson's (R-Pa.) Farm, Food and National Security Act of 2026, commonly referred to as Farm Bill 2.0. The legislation, proposed last month, includes workforce training and development for meat and poultry processing, rendering and precision agriculture. [Click here for full article](#)

NCC SUBMITS SUGGESTED STRATEGIES TO REDUCE SALMONELLA IN POULTRY PRODUCTS

March 6, 2026 at [NCCWashingtonReport.com](https://www.nccwashingtonreport.com) by Tom Super

Following the Food Safety and Inspection Service's (FSIS) recent public meeting on "Exploring Practical Strategies to Reduce Salmonella in Poultry Products," NCC this week submitted comments to the agency outlining suggested strategies to reduce Salmonella in poultry products. "We appreciate FSIS's partnership in this process and the Agency's commitment to identifying practical, implementable solutions grounded in common sense and gold standard science," wrote Ashley Peterson, Ph.D., NCC senior vice president of scientific and regulatory affairs. [Click here for full article](#)

INCLUDING HOT ROTISSERIE CHICKEN IN SNAP RECEIVES BIPARTISAN SUPPORT DURING FARM BILL MARK-UP

March 6, 2026 at [NCCWashingtonReport.com](https://www.nccwashingtonreport.com) by Tom Super

As the House Agriculture Committee worked to mark-up and approve the Farm Bill on Wednesday, members of the committee debated whether hot rotisserie chicken should be available through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), after an amendment offered by Rep. Rick Crawford (R-AR). SNAP already covers cold rotisserie chicken. [Click here for full article](#)

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IMPROVING POULTRY SALMONELLA CONTROL: PRE-HARVEST INDICATORS AND DIAGNOSTICS

January 8, 2026 at [PoultryTimes.com](https://www.poultrytimes.com) by Dr. Francene Van Sambeek

Identifying signs of pre-harvest Salmonella are critical for poultry producers seeking to protect the economic viability of their operation. An outbreak of the illness in flocks can have costly consequences: 2020 national estimates placed the annual burden of Salmonella at \$2.8 billion. [Click here for full article](#)

INNOVATIVE NGS WORKFLOW ACCELERATES SALMONELLA DETECTION AND TYPING, AIDING CONTROL

January 21, 2026 at [ModernPoultry.Media](https://www.modernpoultrymedia.com)

A new rapid testing method is helping poultry producers detect Salmonella faster and more efficiently than ever before. The method, developed by Ceva Animal Health, dramatically shortens turnaround time while reducing testing costs by nearly two-thirds.

[Click here for full article](#)

ADVANCING SCIENCE-BASED APPROACHES TO SALMONELLA CONTROL IN MEAT

February 9, 2026 at [FoodSafety.com](https://www.foodsafety.com) by Christi Calhoun

Salmonella continues to represent one of the most persistent and multifaceted challenges in food safety, especially within meat production and processing systems. Despite decades of advancements in hygienic design, intervention technologies and microbial monitoring, this pathogen remains the leading cause of bacterial foodborne illness globally. While prevalence in raw products has declined significantly, these reductions have not corresponded with proportional decreases in human illness. [Click here for full article](#)

DOES SALMONELLA KENTUCKY MAKE PERFORMANCE DATA MISLEADING?

February 23, 2026 at [WattAgNet.com](https://www.wattagnet.com) by Meredith Dawson

A flaw in the federal poultry safety standards could be inadvertently encouraging the industry to focus resources on controlling a Salmonella strain that has minimal risk on human health, according to Dr. Martin Wiedmann, DVM, Ph.D., food safety professor, Cornell University. [Click here for full article](#)



SALMONELLA VACCINATION PROVED EFFECTIVE IN BROILER BREEDERS

February 12, 2026 at WattAgNet.com by Elizabeth Doughman

A two-year surveillance study published in *Frontiers* shows that Salmonella vaccination programs are working in broiler breeder flocks, while unexpectedly revealing potential transmission pathways for the poultry pathogen. [Click here for full article](#)

USDA STILL PROBING HOW TO BEST REDUCE SALMONELLA INFECTIONS FROM POULTRY

February 13, 2026 at MeatingPlace.com by Peter Voskamp

The USDA implemented performance standards in the late 1990s, with a marked reduction of Salmonella incidence in poultry since then. Yet, while the FSIS testing data show that Salmonella contamination in poultry has decreased over recent decades, rates of human Salmonella illness have remained steady, far from USDA's goal of reducing such illnesses by 25%. [Click here for full article](#)

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References:
1-3. Data on file at Boehringer Ingelheim.



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MUSINGS FROM TOM - WHAT HISTORY TEACHES US



As I sit at the computer in my office on this late-January morning, it is still dark outside and all of 8°F showing on the thermometer with ½" of ice covering everything for miles around. The crew here at Middle Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center where I am housed is on 24-hour maternity watch because it is calving season here at the station and there are over 100 soon-to-be new mamas tucked snugly away in every barn and shed available so that they don't have their calves out on some icy wind swept plain or (for the smarter, more experienced ones) down in some hollow out of the wind but where it is still 8° and ice on the ground. The cattle crew put the cows in the barns last week because they knew what would happen. History is a good teacher for those of us smart enough to and learn from it. Cattle are notorious for dropping their calves during the worst possible

weather conditions. This is the worst weather since January of last year so, naturally, now is calving time.

Things are much the same in the poultry business where history is concerned. History can teach us a lot if we will learn from those before us. For example, if there is the slightest question as to whether or not you have enough feed to make it over the weekend, trust me, you do not. You will run out somewhere around noon on Sunday. Call the mill now and order more feed. It will be the same with that tunnel fan later this summer that is making a funny noise. The motor won't burn out in June because the high temperature will only be 85°F. It will wait until July to burn out when the temperature is 98° and the birds are older and larger, that way there is more heat loss mortality to contend with. You most likely will never have a huge water spill in the house when the birds are 3 weeks old. That water spill will happen the day before the flock sells. That makes it easier for the loader to get stuck inside the chicken house while the birds are being caught. Oh, the things that history can teach us!

Perhaps the most important thing that history teaches us is that things change. Like it or not, good or bad, things change. I've been in the chicken business a long time. I started my first job, fresh out of college, on January 1, 1979, as a broiler service technician for Mountaire Farms, Inc. in Nashville, AR. Shortly thereafter, that Mountaire complex in Arkansas was purchased by Pilgrim's Pride of Pittsburg, TX. Many years later, Pilgrim's Pride was purchased by the large Brazilian multinational company, JBS, and its headquarters moved to Greeley, CO. The poultry industry is always in flux and the sooner we adjust to that and learn to roll with the flow, the sooner our blood pressure can get back to something hopefully approaching normal.

I've seen a lot of history happen in the poultry industry, some good some perhaps, not so good. Curtain-sided, *(continued on next page)*

naturally-ventilated broiler houses gave way to solid-sidewall, tunnel-ventilated houses. That has proven beneficial but, at the time, there was a steep learning curve because everyone had to learn ventilation principles all over again. It was much the same with drinkers. There was no such thing as nipple drinkers back in the 1970s. Eight-foot troughs and bell drinkers ruled the day. Most commercial poultry growers today likely have no idea what an eight-foot trough drinker is, let alone having ever seen one. If that's you, consider yourself lucky. They were difficult, troublesome contraptions to manage that made it inviting to utter a bad word from time to time. No one misses the amount of time and effort it took to keep eight-foot troughs and bell drinkers clean so that the birds had good quality water to drink. However, the out-of-sight out-of-mind mentality of nipple drinkers comes with its own set of problems. We often overlook the biofilm issue that accompanies nipple drinker systems. We assume nipple drinkers are better and that there is always water in the drinker line, but if we don't constantly check it, we don't know that for sure. Better is not trouble free.

Perhaps the most important thing history teaches us is that there is no free lunch. Regardless of what you may have been told or want to believe, it is impossible to get something for nothing, and keep in mind that for everything you win, there's something lost. This is certainly the case in the poultry business. I have worked on my share of eight-foot troughs to stop them from leaking and I have washed more than my share of bell drinkers to make sure the birds had clean water. I have no desire to do either again. However, while working on eight-foot troughs and washing bell drinkers, I always came across other things in the chicken house that needed attention that I might have missed if I hadn't been in the chicken house. And I've been on both sides of the relationship fence when it comes to washing drinkers. Sometimes, I was the service tech visiting with the grower washing drinkers. Sometimes, I was the grower washing drinkers visiting with my service tech. Either way, those relationships were valuable.

While on the subject of relationships, it doesn't seem that relationships are as tight or close-knit as they were back in the '70s and '80s. Relationships are what built the poultry industry and why I have stayed in it all these years. Technology has resulted in a faster pace and, some would claim, greater efficiency. While I agree with the faster pace, I might argue the greater efficiency aspect. Personally, I deplore Zoom and Teams as much as I do text messages, voice mail, and cell phones. Every time I cross a bridge on the road, I want to throw my cell phone in the creek. When I want to talk to someone, I would prefer to have them standing in front of me so that we could make eye contact. I tend to think that losing these close relationships that have made the poultry industry what it is may be a mistake. And history teaches that if we don't learn from our mistakes, we are doomed to repeat them again.

Another thing that history teaches those of us in the poultry industry is that you must spend time in the chicken house to grow good chickens. For the most part, good growers are good growers for a reason. They spend time in the chicken house and they address issues as they occur. They work 5 AM to 10 PM shifts, not 10 AM to 5 PM shifts. Again, there's no such thing as a free lunch. It's difficult to grow good chickens if you don't know what's going on in the chicken house. Tunnel ventilation, nipple drinkers, controllers, backups, alarms, communicators, etc. were designed to make our time in the chicken house more efficient, not remove us from the chicken house. They were designed to make our time in the chicken house more productive and beneficial, not take us out of the house all together. THE CONTROLLER CANNOT GROW THE CHICKENS. The controller is only a tool to help you grow the chickens. But you must be in the chicken house to do that.

Anyone in the livestock business has an obligation to the livestock that they are responsible for, regardless of whether that animal is a horse, cow, hog, chicken, etc. Critters are not like a field of (*continued on next page*)

corn or soybeans. Critters need dedicated individuals willing to provide constant care. If that's not you, perhaps the livestock business is not the best career choice for you. Over the years, I've missed a lot of events with my wife and kids because there was something wrong at the chicken houses or I was off helping someone else that had something wrong at their chicken houses. They have not always been happy that, in many cases, I put the chickens before them, but history has taught them that's just the way I am. They haven't always agreed, but they have always understood. I have regrets, but I refuse to neglect live animals that depend on me for their survival.

During the 100+ year history of the poultry industry in the U.S., we have seen many monumental changes take place. Those changes continue today as we envision the potential of what precision livestock farming practices hold for the future of the industry and its growers. However, even though new ways of doing things constantly appear on the horizon, history teaches us that the core principles and values that have guided the industry to its present position (close relationships, hard work, dedication, and a commitment to the livestock in our care) should not change and cannot be replaced. 🐔



VACCINES

IMPROVING POULTRY VACCINE SUPPLY: INSIDE THE MANUFACTURING

December 11, 2025 at [ModernPoultry.Media](#)

Behind every successful poultry operation is a dependable vaccine supply chain. But producing vaccines is no small feat — it requires precision, foresight and the ability to adapt to biological and regulatory challenges. Here, Daniel Hamby, senior associate director of manufacturing science and technology at Boehringer Ingelheim, gives a behind-the-scenes look at vaccine production and explains what it takes to deliver consistent, high-quality products to the industry. [Click here for full article](#)

USPOULTRY TOUTS LATEST RESEARCH FOR MRNA POULTRY VACCINES

December 17, 2025 at [MeatPoultry.com](#) by Rachael Oatman

The US Poultry & Egg Association (USPOULTRY) and its Foundation announced the completion of a research project that developed messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA) vaccines for two major poultry viruses. [Click here for full article](#)

LAYERING IBV VACCINES HELPS BRIDGE IMMUNITY GAPS IN BROILER PRODUCTION

December 22, 2025 at [ModernPoultry.Media](#)

Layering vaccines against Infectious Bursal Disease (IBD) can offer broiler flocks added protection to help combat the challenges posed by the costly disease. [Click here for full article](#)

STUDY SHOWS DRINKING WATER QUALITY SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACTS SALMONELLA VACCINES FOR POULTRY

March 6, 2026 at [FoodSafety.com](#)

In pre-harvest poultry production, live Salmonella vaccines are often administered through drinking water, thereby requiring water quality to be compatible with live vaccines. [Click here for full article](#)



TECHNOLOGY WILL DIRECT FUTURE ADVANCEMENTS IN ANIMAL WELFARE AND PRODUCTIVITY

August 18, 2025 at [ModernPoultry.Media](#)

Technology is part of everyday life in a poultry house, and it has helped the industry achieve production goals efficiently, sustainably and with more speed than imagined. But with these technological advances, animal agriculture is on the cusp of a major change. [Click here for full article](#)

AI VISION SYSTEM COULD ENHANCE BROILER HARVEST PLANNING

January 13, 2026 at [WattAgNet.com](#) by Elizabeth Doughman

A monitoring system powered by artificial intelligence (AI) could help poultry integrators optimize harvest planning by continuously tracking broiler weights and automatically selecting farms to maximize premium yields. [Click here for full article](#)

BROILER CHICK SEX, WEIGHT SORTING COULD IMPROVE UNIFORMITY

January 14, 2026 at [WattAgNet.com](#) by Elizabeth Doughman

An automated sorting system that simultaneously identifies chick gender and weight could help broiler producers achieve greater flock uniformity while reducing labor costs and transportation expenses. [Click here for full article](#)

MRI TECHNOLOGY COULD IMPROVE POULTRY HATCHERY EFFICIENCY

January 28, 2026 at [WattAgNet.com](#) by Elizabeth Doughman

Advanced imaging technology originally developed for medical diagnostics is now being adapted for broiler, layer and turkey hatcheries, offering producers the ability to detect egg quality issues and optimize production in ways previously impossible. [Click here for full article](#)

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HOW EGG PRODUCERS CAN USE CHATGPT TO ANALYZE DATA

February 10, 2026 at WattAgNet.com by Meredith Dawson

Existing artificial intelligence (AI) platforms offer options for producers to evaluate historical production records and identify performance patterns. [Click here for full article](#)



TPA Executive Committee members Keith Riley and Andy Todd represented TPA at a recent corn hole competition for the UT Martin women's basketball team. The TPA corn hole boards came in very handy!

January 14, 2026

Foreign Ownership

On December 19, the USDA published an [advanced notice](#) in the Federal Register seeking public comment on proposed updates to the Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA). AFIDA requires certain foreign individuals or entities to report their interests in U.S. farmland. These reports are collected by the USDA and used to provide information to Congress on the effect of foreign ownership in rural communities. In the posting, the USDA cites flawed processes and “evolving national security concerns” as justification for the proposed updates. Comments are requested as to whether the reporting mechanism of AFIDA should differentiate between individuals or entities from nations that are non-adversarial or considered foreign adversaries, among other regulation revisions. Comments may be submitted [here](#). The deadline to submit comments is January 28, 2026.

Revised FSA Programs

On January 12, the FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) published a [final rule](#) to the Federal Register updating several FSA programs to comport with requirements introduced by the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA). The affected programs include the Price Loss Coverage (PLC), Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC), and Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) programs. The final rule modifies provisions in the programs related to reference prices, effective reference prices, base acres, program elections, and payment provisions. Additionally, the FSA will be making “minor administrative changes and updates” to the programs mentioned above. Under this final rule, the enrollment process for the ARC and PLC programs has been delayed until FSA announces a deadline for enrollment later in 2026. The final rule took effect on January 12, 2026.



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February 25, 2026

Farmer Bridge Payments

On February 20, 2026, USDA **announced** the enrollment period for Farmer Bridge Assistance (FBA) program. The enrollment period opened on February 23 and will remain open until April 17, 2026. The FBA Program will provide \$11 billion in bridge payments to producers of row crops. Authorized under the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act, the program will be administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). According to the press release, eligible crops will include barley, chickpeas, corn, cotton, lentils, oats, peanuts, peas, rice, sorghum, soybeans, wheat, canola, crambe, flax, mustard, rapeseed, safflower, sesame, and sunflower. To learn more about how to apply, click [here](#).

Glyphosate Executive Order

On February 18, President Trump signed an **Executive Order** directing USDA to ensure the production of a “continued and adequate” supply of phosphorous and glyphosate-based herbicides. The order invokes the Defense Production Act, which allows the president to prioritize the production of critical minerals and resources for national defense. Phosphorus, a key ingredient in glyphosate, was designated as a critical mineral by the Department of the Interior in 2025. The executive order claims that establishing an adequate supply of phosphorus and glyphosate is “crucial” to national security because glyphosate is the most widely used crop protection tool in the United States. Along with the order itself, the White House also released a **fact sheet** which identifies phosphorus and glyphosate as “essential” to military readiness. It is not clear what the immediate impact of the Executive Order will be or what steps USDA will take to increase phosphorus and glyphosate production.

Pork & Poultry Line Speed Proposals

USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) have issued a **proposed rule** that would increase maximum line speeds for young chicken processing facilities operating under the New Poultry Inspection System. This increase would permit young chicken establishments to operate at line speeds of up to 175 birds per minute (bpm) while turkey establishments could increase maximum line speeds from 60 bpm. Currently, young chicken slaughter establishments under NPIS are permitted to run a maximum line speed of 140 bpm, while turkey establishments are at 55 bpm. Along with the proposal to increase line speeds for certain poultry operations, FSIS has **also proposed** to increase speeds for establishments operating under the New Swine Slaughter Inspection System. This rule would permit facilities to determine their own line speeds “based on their ability to maintain process control.” However, FSIS did note that an FSIS inspector may reduce the line speed at any point if they believe there is a loss of process control or a carcass-by-carcass inspection cannot be effectively made. Both proposed rules will be open for public comment through April 20, 2026.

March 11, 2026

Family Grocery and Farmer Relief Act

On March 5, U.S. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer introduced the **Family Grocery and Farmer Relief Act**. The bill is intended to “break up” U.S. meatpacking companies by preventing those companies from processing more than one type of meat. Additionally, the bill would allow the Federal Trade Commission to require meat processors to divest plants, or alternatively, create new “spin-off” plants. The bill also contains language allowing for a “review” of foreign-owned companies.



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GROWING AMMONIA IN BROILER HOUSES

February 9, 2026 at [ModernPoultryMedia](https://www.modernpoultrymedia.com) by Michael Czarick

Chickens are not the only thing we are growing in our broiler houses. We are also growing ammonia – more precisely, the bacteria in our houses that help produce it. These naturally occurring bacteria thrive in the litter because we provide them with feed/manure, moisture and warmth. In return, they generate carbon dioxide and ammonia as they grow and reproduce.

The more we feed the bacteria, the more moisture we add, and the warmer we keep the houses, the more active they become and the more ammonia they produce. This, of course, can adversely affect broiler performance and health.

House temperature, ammonia production

The fact is, we can't realistically ventilate our way out of an ammonia problem. In short order, the bacteria will quickly replace what our minimum-ventilation fans have removed. The best way to lower ammonia levels in a house is to avoid providing optimal growing conditions for the bacteria – not an easy task. Why is this?

First, it is difficult to stop feeding the bacteria because, obviously, birds will always produce manure. Also, it is hard to limit ammonia by manipulating house temperature because the temperatures we target for optimal bird growth and health are similar to those that promote bacterial activity and, therefore, ammonia production.

Producers who grow birds on built-up litter know this well: Each time they preheat a house, ammonia levels rise along with the temperature.

Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between house temperature and bacterial ammonia production rate from a field study that we conducted. Ammonia concentrations were continuously monitored in a commercial broiler house between flocks, where one tunnel fan operated continuously and fresh air entered through sidewall inlets. As temperatures inside the house rose with the outside temperature, ammonia levels rose as well. When outside and house temperatures fell at night,

bacterial activity decreased and, in turn, so did ammonia concentrations (Figure 2).

Now, it is important to mention another reason why ammonia levels increase as house temperatures rise: chemical reactions that play a role in converting manure into ammonia and are affected by house temperature. These chemical reactions, like the bacteria, increase significantly as house temperatures increase.

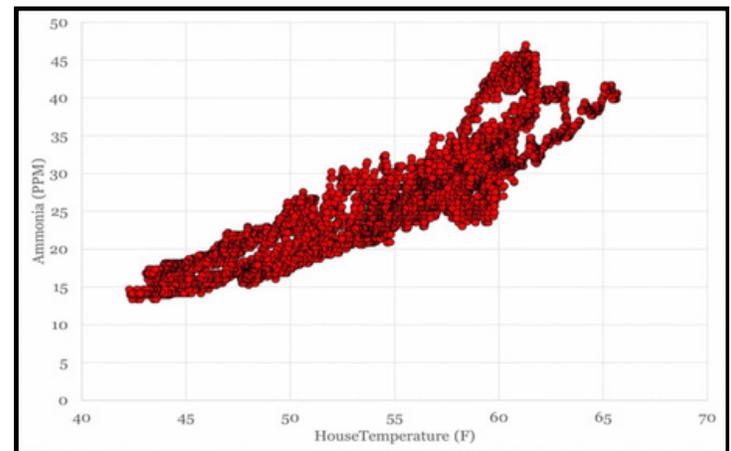


Figure 1. Ammonia concentration (parts per million) versus house temperature (°F)

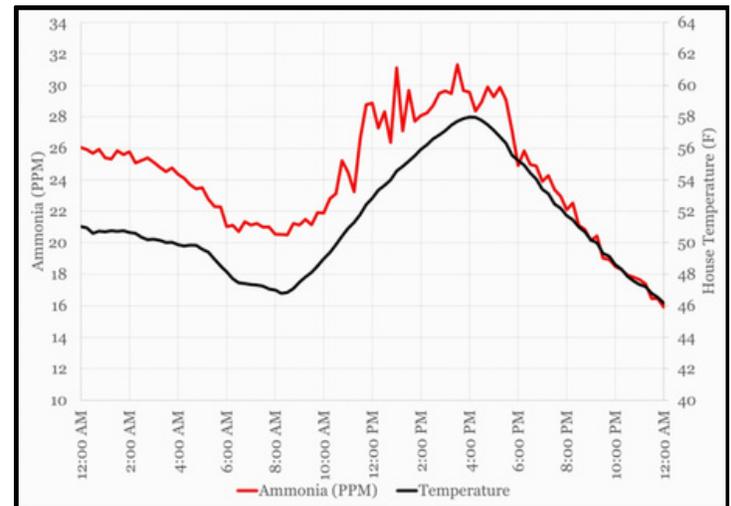


Figure 2. Ammonia concentration and temperature over 24 hours between flocks

Litter moisture, temperature study

The most practical way to limit the growth of litter bacteria – and therefore ammonia production – is to reduce the amount of moisture in the litter. Higher litter moisture creates a more favorable environment for bacterial activity, thus increasing ammonia production. *(continued on next page)*

The optimal litter moisture to minimize bacterial activity is generally reported as being between 15% and 20%. Research conducted by Dana Miles, PhD, a USDA-ARS employee who works with faculty at Mississippi State University, demonstrated that at an air temperature of 75° F (24° C), combined with an increase of litter moisture from 20% to 25%, increased ammonia production by 40%. Increasing moisture levels even further, to 30%, increased ammonia production by 80%.

Additionally, the study reported that optimal conditions for growing litter-producing bacteria were between 42% and 45% litter moisture, at which ammonia production increased nearly 2.5 fold! Interestingly, when litter moisture levels exceeded 50%, ammonia generation tended to decrease because bacteria were essentially being “drowned” in excess moisture. So, like growing any crop, too much or too little moisture is not good for “production.”

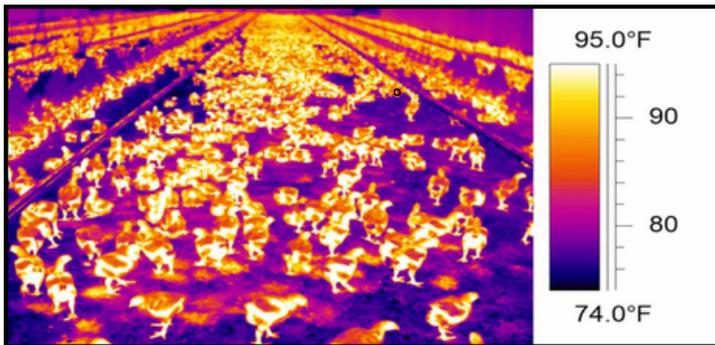


Figure 3. Thermal image illustrating floor heating because of the birds sitting on the litter

Miles also quantified how increasing litter temperature affects litter ammonia production. She observed that at litter temperatures of 95° F (35° C) versus 75° F (24° C) and an increase of litter moisture from 20% to 25%, ammonia production increased 3 fold. Increasing litter moisture to 30% led to a 4-fold increase in ammonia production, and increasing it to 42% to 46% increased ammonia production by 6.5 fold!

Though we might believe that litter temperatures in the 90s occur only during brooding, it is important to realize that a significant portion of the litter in a house will remain in the 90s throughout a flock, as birds sit on and warm the litter with their 106° F (41° C) bodies (Figure 3).

In the end, it is essentially impossible to significantly affect ammonia production by manipulating house air temperature, because any change that would slow down ammonia production would also harm bird performance, health and welfare. Furthermore, as long as birds are in the house, they will warm portions of the litter with their bodies, increasing bacterial activity and ammonia-producing chemical reactions.

Influence of litter pH

Another factor that affects ammonia production is litter pH. Ammonia-producing bacteria do not do well in an acidic environment – the lower the pH, the less ammonia the litter will generate. The challenge is that manure tends to be more basic than acidic, which favors ammonia-producing bacteria.

Acidic litter treatments can temporarily control ammonia production at the beginning of the flock, but the relatively small amount of product applied early on is quickly overwhelmed by the sheer volume of basic-pH manure produced by the birds. This results in the overall litter pH increasing, making conditions more favorable for ammonia-producing bacteria.

Now, it is important to note once again the role that chemistry plays in the conversion of manure to ammonia. Technically, the bacteria in the litter do not directly produce ammonia gas. They produce ammonium, which is then chemically converted to ammonia gas. But this chemical reaction is affected in the same way by the same factors that affect bacterial activity, namely heat, moisture and pH.

So, regardless of the precise scientific process by which ammonia is generated, the fact remains that the best way to limit the productivity of ammonia-producing bacteria, as well as the chemical transformation of the ammonium into ammonia gas, is by controlling litter moisture. The drier the litter, the more it deters bacterial activity and slows chemical reactions, and the better it is for the overall health, performance and welfare of our birds.

Points of consideration (continued on next page)

Below are a few litter moisture-/ammonia-control points to consider:

1. Keep drinkers at the proper height and pressure, and replace worn nipples.
2. Minimum ventilation-fan settings should be based on the relative humidity (RH) of the air in a house. Ideally, house RH should be kept between 40% and 60%.
3. Install a high-volume circulation-fan system capable of circulating between 20% and 25% of a house's volume each minute to aid in removing moisture from the litter.
4. Moisture drying is not just something to work on when birds are present. It is important to remove moisture from the litter between the flocks as well. Close up houses and set minimum-ventilation fans/sidewall inlets to operate between flocks. Increase timer settings during the day when outside temperatures are higher. Operate circulation fans to help remove litter moisture.
5. Preheating to 90° F (32° C) for at least 48 hours and operating minimum-ventilation fans can remove a substantial amount of moisture from the litter, making it easier to control ammonia once the chicks are placed. 🐣

PROPANE REPORT

The Mont Belvieu Propane Spot Price on March 2, 2026, was at \$0.674/gal., not including tariffs, handling, and delivery to most areas. Larger accounts can often negotiate a lower price agreement by as much as \$0.05/gal., or more. To follow Mont Belvieu spot pricing, go to https://www.eia.gov/dnav/pet/hist/er_epllpaf4_y44mb_dpgD.htm and scroll to the very bottom of the page. TPA's allied member propane companies welcome discussing this with you to provide best pricing and services. Their contact information is at the back of this newsletter within the allied member listings.

Propane futures can be followed at <https://www.cmegroup.com/trading/energy/petrochemicals/mont-belvieu-propane-5-decimals-swap.html#>.

Current updates for FMCSA emergency declarations, HOS waivers, and exemptions can be found at <https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/emergency-declarations>.

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