

TRENDS

A Newsletter of the Mississippi Poultry Association



NECROPSY SUBMISSIONS: A REVIEW OF SAMPLE QUALITY OF BIOSECURITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Isabella Hannay, *BVMedSci, MRes, BVM BVS, MAM*
 Assistant Professor, Avian Medicine
 Mississippi Veterinary Research and Diagnostic Laboratory

Necropsy submissions at PRDL are on the increase as we move into the season of higher infectious disease risk. In order to get the best results from your submissions to PRDL, it's important to be familiar with our guidelines for sample quality and biosecurity. This article covers the recommendations presented at the recent PRDL Seminar and Open House event. Our sample receiving staff and veterinarians are happy to answer any questions you have so please feel free to contact us!

Who will be performing the necropsy?

The PRDL veterinarians have a weekly rotation for necropsy duties. This means your contact will vary based on the day of the week. When on necropsy duty, the veterinarian performs all necropsies submitted that day including writing reports and sharing diagnostic test results. Additionally, they are able to assist production staff and industry veterinarians with any questions regarding bird health or a specific case. If you need to get in touch with the poultry veterinarian on duty, call PRDL to be connected.

Sample Drop-Off

When submitting a necropsy case, we encourage clients to provide a detailed history of the flock and the issue you are currently facing. This helps our veterinarians when

creating a differential list of diseases and selecting the most appropriate diagnostic tests. The earlier we receive necropsy submissions, the better for our laboratory staff.

The suggested time for necropsy sample drop-off is before 4.00 p.m. We appreciate your assistance in getting necropsy cases to the lab in a timely manner. This rule doesn't apply to emergencies; we are always happy to assist with concerning cases (e.g. unexplained high mortality). We advise keeping the veterinarian on duty informed during emergencies so we can plan for out-of-hours coverage.

Tissue Submission

Fresh tissue samples are often submitted to the lab for sample collection and further testing. Examples of fresh tissue submitted to PRDL include tracheas, legs, bursas and whole heads with attached necks. Ideally, these samples are refrigerated soon after harvesting and delivered to PRDL within one day of sample collection. Please remember to place samples in separate bags for each house. Both Whirl-Pak and ziplock bags are acceptable for this. Label the sample bags appropriately with the date, company name, farm name and house number. It is important to specify which test you would

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EMERGING
TRENDS
A Newsletter of the Mississippi Poultry Association

2025 ■ Issue 4

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If you would like more information on becoming a MPA member, visit us online or call our office. We would be happy to discuss our membership benefits and how to join with you.

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CONTACT INFORMATION

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like performed on the samples when completing the submission form.

Reminders for sample quality of fresh tissues:

- Submit the correct number of samples per bag. Often samples should be collected from a combination of fresh dead, sick and clinically healthy birds.
- Avoid making unnecessary incisions into samples (e.g. opening length of trachea) as this can lead to contamination or a reduction in sample quality.
- Maintain cold chain (e.g. refrigerate or utilize ice packs during storage/ transportation).
- Don't let the tissues dry out. Keeping the tissues in a sealed bag helps prevent this.
- Transport tissues to PRDL soon after harvesting.
- For tracheas, include the entire neck-length of trachea including larynx.
- For whole heads with attached neck, make a single incision at the base of the neck. Do not remove skin.

Whole Bird Submission

When submitting whole birds for necropsy, we suggest a mixture of live and fresh dead birds are selected. Live birds should show the clinical signs you're concerned about. We don't want welfare to be compromised when transporting birds to the lab. Therefore, ensure that optimum welfare is achieved by avoiding overcrowded conditions and preparing for adverse weather conditions. Often there is some confusion over what counts as 'fresh dead'. It is best to submit dead birds which were picked up on the day of submission. We will struggle to

get answers from birds that have been dead for 2+ days. Please double check the condition of the birds as you bag them up. When submitting a whole bird necropsy case, you should receive a preliminary report with necropsy findings within 24 hours of submission.

High Mortality Events

Once a high mortality event is identified, please remember to call the Board of Animal Health and PRDL. This will help our personnel to prepare to receive your samples and ensure an efficient turnaround.

Biosecurity guidelines for high mortality events:

- A minimum of eleven freshly dead birds per affected house should be selected for submission.
- Triple bag the birds:
 - Spray disinfectant on the surface of each bag.
 - Double-bag the birds inside the house. Add a third bag outside.
- Grower should collect birds on farm.
- Company representative delivers birds to lab.
- Arriving at the lab:
 - Call the lab to obtain guidance on where to park. The lab's outbreak parking map can help clarify locations.
 - Go to your allocated parking space, this should be marked by orange cones.
 - Stay in your vehicle. Call the lab again to let them know you've arrived.
 - A member of the PRDL team will be on hand to collect samples, help you with any submission form questions and disinfect your vehicle prior to leaving. ■

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MS YOUTH COMPETE AT STATE AND NATIONAL EVENTS

Tannah Christensen
MSU Extension Instructor

Mississippi's youth once again proved that dedication, hard work, and a lot of heart can take you far. Six youth proudly represented our state at the National 4-H Poultry and Egg Conference in Louisville, KY, to compete against the top poultry youth in the nation.

Rankin County's Poultry Judging team- Matthew and Joshua Grice and Will Ross spent every spare moment prepping, studying, and sharpening their skills. When competition morning arrived, they were ready for the test- judging production hens, evaluating market products and eggs, and delivering their reasons under pressure. They most certainly under-

stood the assignment and represented Mississippi well.

Alcorn County's Egg Chef Challenge contestant, Kelcey Beene, brought holiday cheer and culinary creativity, wowing the judges with her Egg-nog Ice Cream, placing 6th overall in the national contest- a tremendous accomplishment at one of the toughest contests of the day. Jasper County's Turkey BBQ Contestant, Lucy Holloway, fired up the grill with ease and matched that energy in the presentation room. Her BBQ Turkey Burger and presentation landed her 5th place overall at the national contest. Last, but most certainly not least, Jasper County's Chicken BBQ Contestant, Addison Stringer, sizzled in the contest with her pepper jelly chicken and exceptional presentation skills.

At the national level, the contest is intense, and the expectations are high, but what our youth gain goes far beyond score sheet results. Whether they brought home awards or brought home a new experience, every participant achieved something meaningful- they proved, once again, that Mississippi belongs amongst the best in the nation. Congratulations to our Mississippi 4-H competitors!

We extend our gratitude to the Mississippi Poultry Association, whose continued support of travel expenses enables these youth to take their skills and dreams to the next level each year. ■

GOV. REEVES REQUESTS WAIVERS TO ENCOURAGE HEALTHIER PURCHASES INCLUDING ROTISSERIE CHICKEN

Shelby Wilcher, Press Secretary to Gov. Tate Reeves

Governor Tate Reeves announced in October that he has requested a waiver from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service to ban the purchase of unhealthy processed foods and beverages using Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. Additionally, Governor Reeves requested a waiver allowing the purchase of hot prepared chicken using SNAP benefits.

"Welfare benefits are a hand-up for those in desperate, temporary need," said Governor Tate Reeves. "When taxpayers fund these things, they do so strategically. They're trying to help their neighbors into a better life - a more fulfilling one. That means a job you can be proud of, and a lifestyle that is healthy: on a physical and spiritual level.

"In a nation that is printing money daily just to make our debt payments, it doesn't make sense to throw your tax money at anything other than the true necessities. So, it makes no sense at all to fund sugar instead of hearty nutritious meals. That's why we're amending our food stamp rules to allow good sustaining food like rotisserie chickens and disallow sugary candy and drinks. If the first ingredient is sugar or corn syrup, it won't be available with taxpayer money any more. This has been approved by the Trump administration in 12 states, and I expect Mississippi to be the next. It's just common sense."

Once Governor Reeves' request is approved by the USDA, processed foods that list sugar, cane sugar, corn syrup or high fructose corn syrup as the first ingredient will be prohibited for purchase using SNAP benefits. This excludes granulated sugar, raw sugar, and other single-ingredient sugars used for cooking and baking.

Beverages that list carbonated water and sugar, cane sugar, corn syrup or high fructose corn syrup as the first two ingredients will also be prohibited for purchase using SNAP benefits. Beverages that list aspartame or other low- or noncaloric sweeteners as the first two ingredients will remain eligible for purchase.

Hot prepared chicken will now also be eligible for purchase using SNAP benefits. This includes items like rotisserie and non-fried, non-breaded chicken. Mississippi will also collaborate with the Double Up Food Bucks Program to encourage and increase the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables when hot prepared chicken is purchased.

Governor Reeves' waiver requests are in line with the Trump administration and Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s mission to Make America Healthy Again. Five other states have requested waivers for rotisserie chicken. They are Arkansas, Colorado, Louisiana, Ohio, and Tennessee. ■

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DEMOCRATS PICK UP THREE SEATS 2025 LEGISLATIVE SPECIAL ELECTIONS

Mark Leggett, President, Mississippi Poultry Association

Democrats added two seats in the 52-member Senate and one in the 122-member House of Representatives in special elections called due to court-ordered redistricting and to fill vacancies.

The candidates backed by the MPA Political Action Committee throughout this year won in five districts and lost in five districts. Those numbers include one race decided in August and three special elections in April. As a result of 2025 special elections, there will be six new Senators and four new Representatives serving in their first regular session when the 2026 Legislative session starts, Jan. 6. Those numbers include one Senator and two Representatives elected in special elections who served in the May 2025 special session.

NEW SENATORS ARE:

- **District 2 Open Seat** - DeSoto and Tunica counties. Democrat Theresa Isom defeated Republican Charlie Hoots in November in the race to replace Republican David Parker, who retired when the district was redrawn.
- **District 24 Open Seat** - Leflore, Panola, and Tallahatchie counties. After the retirement of Democrat David Jordan of Greenwood, Justin Pope won in a non-partisan Dec. 2 runoff.
- **Senate District 26 Open Seat** - Hinds and Madison counties. Sen. John Horhn was elected Mayor of Jackson. Kamesha Mumford won in a non-partisan runoff on Dec. 2.

- **Senate District 42** - Forrest, Greene, Jones, and Wayne counties. Donald Hartness defeated incumbent Robin Robinson in the Republican primary in August.
- **Senate District 45 Open Seat** - Forrest and Lamar counties. Republican John Polk retired when the seat was redrawn. Democrat Johnny DuPree was elected in November
- **Senate District 18 Open Seat** - Leake, Neshoba, and Winston counties. Republican Lane Taylor was elected to replace Jennifer Branning in March.

SENATORS RE-ELECTED IN NOVEMBER ARE:

- **District 1** DeSoto and Tate counties. Michael McLendon, Republican incumbent.
- **District 11** Desoto, Tunica, Quitman, Coahoma, and Tate counties Reginald Jackson - Democrat incumbent.
- **District 19** DeSoto County. Kevin Blackwell - Republican incumbent.
- **Senate District 44** Forrest, Lamar, and Perry counties. Chris Johnson - Republican incumbent.

NEW REPRESENTATIVES ARE:

- **District 22** Chickasaw, Clay and Monroe counties. Democrat Justin Crosby defeated Republican incumbent Jon Lancaster in November.
- **District 26 Open Seat**, Bolivar, Coahoma, and Sunflower counties. After Democrat Rep. Orlando Paden was elected mayor of Clarksdale, Democrat Otha Williams won the seat in November.
- **District 23 Open Seat** Calhoun, Lafayette, Pontotoc, and Webster counties. Republican Perry Bailey was elected in a March special election to replace Republican Rep. Andy Stepp, who died in December 2024.
- **District 83 Open Seat** Lauderdale County. Democrat Gregory Elliot was elected in March to replace Democrat Charles Young who also died in December. ■

MPA Best BBQ Chicken Competition

Congratulations!



TOP 3 RESTAURANTS

MPA BOARD MEMBER NAMED ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR

Mark Leggett, *President, Mississippi Poultry Association*

Hinds Community College's annual Homecoming festivities on Oct. 16 included honoring MPA's own Dr. Ryn Laster as the 2025 Alumnus of the Year.

Dr. Laster of Raymond, a 1989 Hinds Community College graduate and current Hinds Foundation Board member, grew up on the campus where both her parents were instructors. Her mother taught English; her father taught engineering graphics and was involved in construction of the Hinds Jackson Campus.

The program for the event recognized Ryn, Director of Food Safety and Animal Welfare at Cal-Maine Foods, noting "Dr. Laster has broken down barriers for women in the poultry science industry and academia. She helped build a pathway from Hinds to Mississippi State University, also her alma mater, for students focused on poultry science careers. And she regularly gives back to the community, ensuring Mississippians without regular access to food have eggs to eat." ■



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REGIONAL F.A.R.M. MEETINGS SET

Hannah East, *Communications Director, MDAC*

The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) will be hosting five regional meetings across Mississippi to hear from farmers and the agriculture industry. These meetings are part of the development of the Future of Agriculture Resiliency for Mississippi (F.A.R.M.) Strategic Plan. The F.A.R.M. Strategic Plan is being created with assistance of an Advisory Council representing private and public sectors with input from farmers and agriculture industry stakeholders. MPA is represented on the council by Dr. Ryn Laster, Director of Food Safety and Animal Welfare for Cal-Maine and MPA President Mark Leggett.

“Farmers find themselves at a critical point in time with many uncertain of what their future in farming holds. These meetings, moderated by Commissioner Gipson, will give farmers and agriculture stakeholders the opportunity to share challenges they are facing, issues that should be addressed in the strategic plan, policy recommendations, and other pertinent information that may guide the Council in developing the strategic plan,” according to the press release.

According to Commissioner Gipson, the F.A.R.M. Strategic Plan will consist of a plan of action for policy recommendations to aid and strengthen Mississippi’s agriculture industry. The finalized strategic plan is expected to be presented to the Mississippi Legislature and Congressional delegation by the fourth quarter of 2026, with interim recommendations provided along the way. ■

MDAC INVITES GROWERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THESE MEETINGS

December 11, 2025, 10:00 a.m.

**Delta Research & Extension Center
Capps Center**
82 Stoneville Rd.
Stoneville, MS 38776

February 4, 2026, 10:00 a.m.

North MS Research & Extension Center Auditorium
5421 MS-145
Verona, MS 38879

January 21, 2026, 10:00 a.m.

**Pearl River Community College-Forrest Campus
Woodall Center Auditorium**
906 Sullivan Dr.
Hattiesburg, MS 39401

February 26, 2026, 10:00 a.m.

Brookhaven FEMA Building
1154 Industrial Park Rd. NE
Brookhaven, MS 39601

March 6, 2026, 10:00 a.m.

MS Trade Mart Atrium
1207 Mississippi St.
Jackson, MS 39202

Check
it
out

Calendar of Events!



SCAN HERE

FOUNDATION BOARD ALLOCATES 2025 AUCTION PROCEEDS FOR EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Mark Leggett, *MPA President*

We told you in our last edition that the 20th annual Scholarship Auction on the final night of the MPA Convention set a new fundraising record. Later contributions bumped the total for 2025 to \$71,945.

We wanted to let you know how your generosity will benefit the next generation of poultry leaders from elementary school to graduate school.

MPA appreciates everyone who donated items, purchased items and

those who made cash contributions to the Foundation to make this our best.

Shannon Moore with Fab-Tec donated \$5,000.00 in an individual contribution to the Foundation. This is the largest cash donation received in the 20 years of the auction.

The Mississippi Poultry Foundation Board of Trustees approved the following disbursements:

- \$7,480 contribution to the MSU Extension Poultry Chain - \$3,000 annual contribution and \$4,800 in a one-time contribution to help with a shortfall in fundraising.
- \$10,000 to the dual enrollment program allowing high school students to take MSU poultry science courses. \$5,040 was to cover tuition for 10 students in the current semester and the remainder for next fall’s class.
- \$10,000 to the Mississippi Poultry Foundation Endowment at MSU. This brings the endowment to \$75,000.
- \$5,000 to MSU Poultry Extension for youth programs involving chicken and eggs.
- \$50,000 for a new seven-month certificate of deposit at 4.34 percent interest.

Members of the Foundation Board of Trustees are: Chairman Mark Hickman, Peco Foods, Vice Chairman Dolph Baker, Cal-Maine Foods, Treasurer Glen Sowell, retired, Lou Ayers, Mar-Jac Poultry, Bill Ricken, Amick Farms, David Gadd, Wayne-Sanderson Farms, Ray Ables, Cobb, and Dr. Petit Ewing, Koch Foods. ■



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JEFF LITTLE SCHOLARSHIP ESTABLISHED AT MSU FOUNDATION

Mark Leggett, *President, Mississippi Poultry Association*

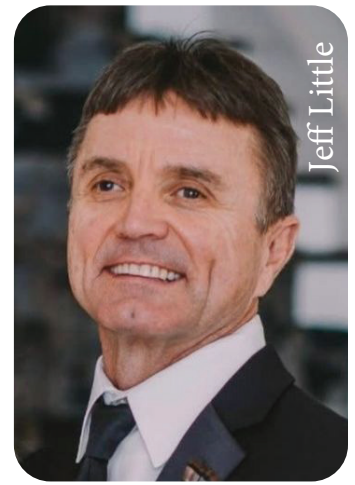
Friends of Jeffrey Clayton "Sparky" Little have established a scholarship in his honor at Mississippi State University and are raising funds to make it an endowed scholarship.

Jeff was a member of the Mississippi Poultry Association Board of Directors when he passed away on April 16, 2025, at the age of 62.

He was Performance Solutions Manager at dsm-firmenich Animal Nutrition and Health.

You can reach the donor page for the Jeff Little Memorial Endowed Scholarship using the QR code.

The Mississippi State University Foundation page states that "Jeff worked in the poultry industry since 1989, building a respected career marked by hard work, reliability, and deep relationships. His professional life reflected the same values he carried into his home and community: consistency, humility, and a servant's heart.



Jeff Little

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"To know Sparky was to feel welcomed, seen, and loved. His legacy is one of laughter, servant-heartedness, deep faith, and unwavering loyalty to those he held dear. He will be deeply missed and forever cherished."



The Jeff Little Memorial Endowed Scholarship will support Mississippi State students majoring in Poultry Science. ■



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MPA DONATES 478,516 SERVINGS OF PROTEIN TO GOVERNOR REEVES; MS FOOD NETWORK, SALVATION ARMY TO DISTRIBUTE

Mark Leggett, *President, Mississippi Poultry Association*

MPA member companies made their 15th annual donation of chicken and eggs to the governor on December 2. Gov. Tate Reeves chose the Miss. Food Network and the Salvation Army to receive the products to be distributed to families in need.

“Thank you to the Mississippi Poultry Association for once again stepping up to serve their fellow Mississippians,” said Governor Tate Reeves. “The Mississippi Food Network and the Salvation Army do a tremendous job serving those who need it most, and I appreciate them for accepting this donation to help fight hunger in our state.”

MPA Executive Committee members gathered at the Miss. Food Network as the last of the trucks arrived for their deliveries.

MPA Chairman of the Board Ed Fletcher, Koch Foods, said “We know that this has been a stressful year for many Mississippi families. The member companies of the Mississippi Poultry Association individually make donations to various organizations throughout the year, but during the holiday season, we come together as a group to make one

large donation to the governor. Today is our 15th donation to Mississippi’s governor.”

The deliveries to the Mississippi Food Network and the Salvation Army began arriving before Thanksgiving. The companies started earlier because of the extra demand these two charities were reporting.

Since the association began this donation to the governor in 2011, MPA members have donated nearly 1 million pounds of chicken and 2 million eggs, which totals almost six million servings of protein.

“We are deeply grateful to the Governor and the Poultry Association for this generous donation. At Mississippi Food Network, partnerships like this make it possible for us to provide nutritious meals to families across our state. This contribution will help us meet the growing need and ensure that no Mississippian goes

hungry,” Said Cassandra Mobley, Interim CEO & COO, Mississippi Food Network

“The Salvation Army is deeply grateful to Governor Reeves and the Mississippi Poultry Association for this generous donation. These chickens and eggs will help us feed hundreds of families across our community. At a time when many are struggling, this gift is more than food—it is hope placed on the table. We are honored to partner together in serving our Mississippi neighbors.” Saud Major Timothy Delaney. ■



Poultry Health Seminar



Scan for more information
February 25th, 2026

TOPICS

Experience with avian metapneumovirus (aMPV) vaccine	PRDL Update
How to minimize the side effects of multiple killed injections	Student report
ILT: control and vaccination strategies	Review of infertility in the broiler breeder industry
Salmonella Regulations Update	Improvement of hatch of fertile
Regulatory Update	Impact of hairline cracks on hatchability



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY POULTRY LAB HOSTS SEMINAR AND OPEN HOUSE

Natalie Armour Manginsay, BVSc, MAM, PhD, DACPV - Associate Professor and Director, Poultry Research and Diagnostic Laboratory
Department of Pathobiology and Population Medicine, College of Veterinary Medicine, MSU

The Poultry Research and Diagnostic Laboratory (PRDL) in Pearl hosted a successful continuing education event for commercial poultry clients of the laboratory on October 9. The Poultry Lab Seminar and Open House, sponsored by IDEXX, brought together 70 participants, including 41 in-person attendees and 29 online attendees. Attendees included representatives of 8 poultry companies and 3 allied companies, as well as 3 consultant veterinarians and MSU College of Veterinary Medicine and Poultry Science faculty.



in poultry diagnostics, including Necropsy, Bacteriology, Virology, Serology and PCR testing. Presenters discussed best practices for sample collection and submission and provided information about important disease updates. Attendees also heard from IDEXX representative Dr. Reshma Ramachandran on interpreting avian metapneumovirus serology results, and state veterinarian Dr. Jim Watson on regulatory updates.

In-person attendees had the option to participate in guided laboratory tours showcasing PRDL's diagnostic facilities, which provided the opportunity for PRDL clients to meet and interact with the laboratory's technical and professional staff and get a behind-the-scenes perspective on testing performed at the PRDL. The event concluded with lunch, which provided additional networking opportunities. The Poultry Lab Seminar and Open House was well received by clients, and the laboratory intends to hold this event annually in the future. ■

The morning featured presentations from PRDL faculty including Drs. Isabella Hannay, Sofia Egana-Labrin, Martha Pulido-Landinez, and Natalie Manginsay, highlighting key topics such as developments

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BASED ON SUMMER MEETINGS

2026 LEGISLATURE COULD ADDRESS KEY POULTRY ISSUES

Mark Leggett, *President - Mississippi Poultry Association*

Sales Tax - Eliminate the 1.5 percent sales tax rate that growers pay for farm implements and repair parts. Many of the items in a poultry house are taxed at the 1.5 percent rate. This was discussed in a Senate Agriculture Committee meeting in October.

Industrial Sales Tax Exemptions – The section of law with exemptions for manufacturing and processing is up for renewal this year. One paragraph in this lengthy section contains the exemption for pollution control equipment installed by companies.

Emergency Road and Bridge Repair Fund (ERBRF) – The Legislature did not provide any funds in the 2025 session for the ERBRF created in 2018. MPA has a seat on the ERBRF Advisory Board. MPA believes the ERBRF program has used the \$500 million allocated through 2024 to address transportation needs at the local level and the program should be continued.

Insurance Mitigation - The Legislature let the current mitigation program for homes along the Coast expire and did not act on bills to create a mitigation program that could have awarded grants to lower insurance costs by strengthening poultry houses. Since the homeowner mitigation program will have to be re-authorized this session, there is the possibility of adding in farms.

School Choice – This is a premier issue for the Speaker of the House and the Governor, but which has little support in the Senate. State funds would follow the student who transfers from one district to another. There has not been much discussion about how the transfers could impact property taxes as some districts grow in enrollment and others shrink.

Pharmacy Benefit Management (PBM)– Pharmacists continue to push for higher dispensing fees and restrictions on PBMs that could cost employers and employees more in health insurance costs. In the last two legislative sessions, the pharmacists have rejected compromise bills.

MSU Agricultural Units – The university is seeking an increase in funding for the Vet School, the Extension Service, the Experiment Stations among other separately-funded units on campus. These Mississippi State University units provide vital services to the state's poultry industry.

Reorganization of State Boards and Commissions -This is a priority for Lt. Gov. Delbert Hosemann, who wants to reduce the 200 or so state agencies. MPA has a seat on the Board of Animal Health which sets state animal disease policy.

There have been study committees meeting since the end of the 2025

session on topics such as: health insurance, the Public Employees Retirement System, revitalization of Jackson, artificial intelligence, and seafood marketing, among others.

With the special elections in 2025, several committee chairmen either retired or were defeated in the Senate.

- Accountability, Efficiency and Transparency David Parker-*Retired*
- Business and Financial Institutions John Polk-*Retired*
- Labor Robin Robinson-*Defeated*
- Housing John Horhn elected Jackson-*Mayor*
- Enrolled Bills Jordan-*Retired*

“Star-Spangled” Omelet

Evie and Charlie Haffey

Ingredients & Directions

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 2-3 Fresh Eggs | Sautéed Chopped White Onion |
| Splash of Water | Fresh, Washed Spinach Leaves |
| Pinch of Salt | Shredded Monterey Jack Cheese |
| Dash of Ground Peppercorn Medley | |
| 1 Tbsp. Butter | Precooked Beef Strips |
| Sautéed Mushrooms | Garnish of Crushed Blue Corn Tortilla Chips |
| Sautéed Red Bell Peppers | |

- 1) On Medium High, heat non-stick pan. Place pat(s) of butter in pan to melt.
- 2) Beat eggs with whisk. Mix in splash of water to eggs, with sprinkle of salt and pepper.
- 3) Pour mixture into pan. Flip cooked egg. Reduce heat.
- 4) Add cheese, veggies, and beef strips in the amount that fills the omelet best.
- 5) Fold over, remove from pan, and serve with garnish of crushed blue corn chips.



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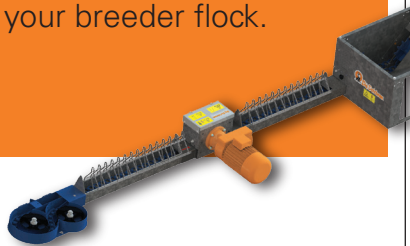
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4-H DAY AT MISSISSIPPI STATE FAIR



Tannah Christensen, MSU Extension Instructor

This year's 250th celebration of America at the Mississippi State Fair brought big flavors and even bigger creativity at the 4-H Day at the State Fair Omelet Cook-off Contest. Young chefs from across Mississippi fired up the skillets and prepared patriotic-themed omelets that were every bit as festive as the fair itself. Each participant was given 60 minutes to cook, plate, and present their creation to a panel of judges. This year's judging lineup included Director of MSU Extension, Dr. Angus Catchot, WLBT Studio 3's Host, Angela Evans, Associate Director of MSU Extension, Dr. Trent Irby, and Mar-Jac Poultry, Mississippi's Laboratory Manager, James Faison.

Fifteen youth put their culinary skills to the test. Itawamba County's Evie and Charlie Haffey brought home the grand prize of 1st place with their "Star Spangled Omelet." Coming up in a close race was



sister Ellie Haffey, bringing home 2nd place with her "Ellie's Founding Farmer's Omelet." Placing third was Madison County's Henry Klein with the "All-American Cheeseburger Omelet." Kairi and Zelda Robertson from Madison County scored Best Beef Omelet with their "Birria Steak Omelet." Matching the spirit of the day, Evie and Charlie also took away "Best Patriotic Costume," embracing their patriotic spirit from head to toe.

"Getting to see these young students get creative with making omelettes is so much fun. These kinds of events give those children who don't live on a farm a big place in 4-H. We are proud that 4-H is growing every year, and we think the programs within will help develop the next generation of agricultural leaders." Dr. Ryn Laster, Cal-Maine

The Mississippi Poultry Association partnered with the Mississippi Egg Marketing Board and the Mississippi Beef Council to sponsor the big event hosted by the Mississippi State Department of Poultry Science. From sizzling skillets to star-spangled flavors, this year's cook-off was a true celebration of youth creativity, American pride, and Mississippi agriculture. Thank you to our sponsors for making such an amazing event possible. ■



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MACK WALKER PORTRAIT HUNG IN HALL OF FAME AT MSU POULTRY SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

Mark Leggett, *President-Mississippi Poultry Association*



Those who spoke at the Nov. 14 ceremony to add Mack Walker's portrait to the Mississippi Poultry Hall of Fame at the MSU Poultry Science Department, highlighted Mack's people skills and his Christian walk. Mack, who retires in 2026, is Tyson's Mississippi Complex Manager.



Walker, who worked for McCarty Farms and Tyson Foods for 50 years, is the 39th person inducted into the Hall of Fame.

Shane Joyner, vice president of live operations for Tyson Foods, said when he was in Tennessee working for Tyson Foods that he would bring staff down to Mack's offices to see teamwork in action.

Calvin Bailey with Tyson said Mack told them to "love people, be kind to people and forgive people." Turning to Mack, he said, "You have inspired a lot of people."

Retired Director of the MSU Poultry Research and Diagnostic Lab, Dr. Danny Magee, who was last year's Hall of Fame inductee and who served as master of ceremonies for this year's event, said of Mack that, "All his relationships reflect his Christian walk."

Ray Ables, Cobb vice president of Live Production, who preceded



Mack as complex manager, said he had known him for 15 years and heard him pray at the start of many company and MPA meetings. "Every industry, every company needs a prayer like Mack"

Walker said induction into the Hall of Fame "was a humbling experience... usually you don't hear things like that unless you are in your casket."

Mack graduated from MSU in 1975 with a dairy science degree and went to work for McCarty Farms. He worked in processing before moving into live production. Tyson bought McCarty Farms in 1995. Mack, who served on the MPA Board of Directors for 20 years, was Chairman of the MPA Board of Directors in 2024. ■



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DEVELOPING TOMORROW'S LEADERS - 4-H POULTRY CHAIN PROJECT



Tannah Christensen, MSU Extension Instructor

This year's Mississippi 4-H Poultry Chain Project officially kicked off in mid-May when participating youth received their day-old chicks and began their five-month journey in poultry care, management, and leadership. All roads led to the 13th annual 4-H Poultry Chain Project Show hosted by Mississippi State University Department of Poultry Science, held at the Mississippi State Fair on October 8th.

A total of 110 youth representing 34 counties participated in the 2025 project, with 64 exhibitors attending the show. Throughout the program, participants gained hands-on experience in animal husbandry, daily flock management, recordkeeping, biosecurity, and general poultry production practices. Beyond raising quality birds, youth developed essential workforce readiness skills, including responsibility, problem-solving, communication, and time management.

The Poultry Chain Project continues to serve as a gateway for Mississippi youth to explore future careers in the poultry and agriculture industries. Participants develop leadership abilities, learn to work

independently as well as part of a team, and gain confidence through showing their birds, interviewing with judges, and interacting with industry professionals.

Contestants competed in four categories (Junior Layer, Junior Meat, Senior Layer, and Senior Meat) with seven placings in each, along with showmanship and cutest coop competition for both junior and senior classes. In total, 36 places were presented.

Thanks to our generous donors, a total of \$11,350 in monetary awards and trophies with buckles were presented to winners graciously donated by the following companies: Southern AgCredit, Mississippi Poultry Foundation, Tyson Foods, Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation, First South Farm Credit, and Mr. Kelby King. Without these contributions, these programs would not be possible. Thank you for your support!

If you are interested in donating to our poultry youth programs, please contact Tannah Christensen, Extension Instructor Poultry

...continued on page 21

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John is family oriented and looking forward to helping farmers in his community and throughout Mississippi at FFB. He will lean on his already strong relationships with poultry farmers in the state to achieve that.

Outside of FFB, John enjoys spending time outdoors whether it's hunting or fishing. He enjoys traveling and spending time with his wife and son and daughter.

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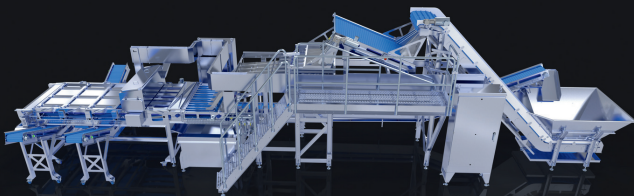
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continued from page 19...

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Donations may also be made using the QR code below- please include "State Poultry Programs" in the comments.



Congratulations to the following award winners for their hard work and success in the 2025 4-H Poultry Chain Project.

Senior Showmanship Grand Champion \$300

Annalyn Grace Cates Lamar County

Senior Showmanship Reserve Champion \$150

Kaylin Hubbard Tippah County

Junior Showmanship Grand Champion \$300

Selah Hubbard Tippah County

Junior Showmanship Reserve Champion \$150

Camille Shumaker Pontotoc County

Junior Meat Grand Champion \$1,000

Lucie Waters Lamar County

Junior Meat Reserve Champion \$500

William Caldwell Jones County

1st \$300 – Cooper Cates Lamar County

2nd \$250 – Heidi Hood Forrest County

3rd \$200 – Joshua Flatt Chickasaw County

4th \$150 – Hunter Daniel Rule DeSoto County

5th \$100 – Camille Shumaker Pontotoc County

Junior Layer Grand Champion \$1,000

Selah Hubbard Tippah County

Junior Layer Reserve Champion \$500

Kaitlyn Olivia Rottmann Madison County

1st \$300 – Zoey Byrd Calhoun County

2nd \$250 – Ellie Treadway DeSoto County

3rd \$200 – Benton Sowell Rankin County

4th \$150 – Kylie Jo Jones Forrest County

5th \$100 – Jacob Kitchens Lauderdale County

Senior Meat Grand Champion \$1,000

Annalyn Grace Cates Lamar County

Senior Meat Reserve Champion \$500

Abigail Mathis Smith County

1st \$300 – Terin Long Rankin County

2nd \$250 – Brynley Speck DeSoto County

3rd \$200 – Emmy Tolar Marion County

4th \$150 – Julie Anna Chamberlin DeSoto County

5th \$100 – Joy Kitchens Lauderdale County

Senior Layer Grand Champion \$1,000

Emma Wofford DeSoto County

Senior Layer Reserve Champion \$500

John Clayton Kitchens Lauderdale County

1st \$300 – Kaylin Hubbard Tippah County

2nd \$250 – Levi Thompson Union County

3rd \$200 – Anna Laura Haden Jasper County

4th \$150 – Chance Haden Jasper County

5th \$100 – Susan Schroyer Yalobusha County

Senior Cutest Coop Grand Champion \$150

Terin Long Rankin County

Senior Cutest Coop Reserve Champion \$75

Julie Anna Chamberlin DeSoto County

Junior Cutest Coop Grand Champion \$150

Kaitlyn Olivia Rottmann Madison County

Junior Cutest Coop Reserve Champion \$75

Heidi Hood Forrest County





SOUTHERN AGCREDIT TRAVEL GRANT ALLOWS STUDENTS TO PRESENT RESEARCH AT IPPE

Ken Macklin, PhD, Department Head and Professor, Department of Poultry Science

Three Mississippi State University graduate students will share the 2025 Southern AgCredit Travel grant awarded by the Mississippi Poultry Foundation.

The three students, researching nutrition and disease transmission, will present their findings at the International Poultry Science Forum at the International Poultry and Processing Exposition in Atlanta, January 27-29. The grant from Southern AgCredit helps cover their travel costs.

“We are pleased to assist some of the up-and-coming researchers at Mississippi State University who are searching for ways to make the poultry industry more productive,” said Cooper Stringer, Vice President/Branch Manger Southern AgCredit. “This travel grant has helped students in making their transition into their professional careers since 2016.”

Charis Waters is a Ph.D. student under MSU Associate Professor Dr. Pratima Adhikari, specializing in poultry nutrition research.

Waters has participated in numerous nutrition trials aimed at improving laying hen production and performance. Her recent work focuses on determining the effects of soybean meal and distillers dried grains with solubles (DDGS) on performance, egg quality, egg solids and nutrient digestibility in Hy-Line W36 laying hens.

The abstract that Waters will present in Atlanta is titled, “Comparative effect of soybean meal and corn distillers dried grains – based diets on amino acid digestibility, performance and egg quality in laying hens.” The objective of the study was to examine the role of soybean meal which provides a balanced branched chain



Charis Waters



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amino acids (BCAA) profile, whereas DDGS has elevated Leu:Ile and Leu:Val ratios, which could potentially induce BCAA antagonism in layers. Results from this study show that moderate inclusions of DDGS (<7.5-15%) with amino acid supplementation in soybean-meal-based diets support optimal egg production and nitrogen and crude protein utilization. Higher levels of DDGS (22.5 and 30%) inclusion in the diet reduces feed efficiency and egg production despite inclusion of supplemental amino acids.



Matthew Hughes

Matthew Hughes is a Master of Science student advised by Dr. Chrysta Beck, a new Assistant Professor in the Poultry Department at MSU. This is Hughes' first project with her, and his research primarily focuses on understanding maternal antibody transfer from the hen to the chick. The title of his abstract to be presented at IPPE is "Effect of broiler breeder egg translucency and oviposition on maternal antibody levels, egg composition and chick organ weights."

The goal of the research was to determine if eggshell translucency and oviposition time can influence chick quality and maternal antibody levels. Results suggest that the translucency score or oviposition time

does not influence maternal antibody levels from chicks produced from 35-week-old hens. However, liver weight differences suggest that eggs laid later in the day may produce better growing birds. To verify this finding further research needs to be conducted.

Carlos Guardado is currently a Ph.D. student of Dr. Adhikari working with E. coli on laying hens. He has looked at modeling various E. coli isolates under different challenge conditions. His presentation at IPPE is entitled, "Evaluation of virulence genotypes of avian pathogenic Escherichia coli using a subcutaneous model in layer pullet chicks." Avian pathogenic Escherichia coli (APEC) causes colibacillosis, reduced growth, decreased egg production and potential mortality in layers.



Carlos Guardado

This study compared APEC isolates of varying virulence using a subcutaneous infection model. His research concluded that E. coli isolates of different combinations of five distinct virulence-associated genes exhibit unique colonization patterns when injected subcutaneously into layer pullet chicks. ■

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PAUL BILLINGSLEY TO CHAIR MPA BOARD IN 2026

Mark Leggett, *President, MPA*

Paul Billingsley, Vice President of Development and Engineering at Wayne-Sanderson Farms, will serve as chairman of the Mississippi Poultry Association for 2026. He will take over as chairman on January 1.

As Vice President of Development and Engineering, Paul oversees Environmental and Engineering functions across the entire Wayne-Sanderson Farms footprint which includes operations in Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Alabama, Georgia, and North Carolina. He is based at the company's Laurel Regional Office.

Paul began his career in the food industry at Bryan Foods in West Point. In 1994, he started working for Sanderson Farms as an Advanced Management Trainee. Throughout his tenure, he has held multiple roles with increasing levels of responsibility including titles of Division Manager at facilities in Mississippi and Texas, Corporate Processing Manager responsible for multiple locations, and Director of Development and Engineering.



Following the 2022 merger of Wayne Farms and Sanderson Farms, which created Wayne-Sanderson Farms, Paul became the Vice President of Development and Engineering for the new company.

Paul and his wife, Christy, live in Hattiesburg. A native of Picayune, Paul graduated from Mississippi State University with a Bachelor of Accountancy and a Master of Business Administration.

Other members of the 2026 MPA executive committee are: Vice Chairman of the Board James Faison, Mar-Jac Poultry MS LLC; Treasurer Dr. Ryn Laster, Cal Maine Foods, Inc.; Immediate Past Chairman Ed Fletcher, Foods; Past Chairman Bobby James, Amick Farms, LLC; Executive Committee Members At-Large Members Anthony DeLee, Peco Foods, Inc., and Scott McKinion, Tyson Foods, Inc.; and Chairman of the Grower Advisory Committee Kevin Rhodes, Koch Foods Grower. ■



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DEFINING “WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES”

Ken Rogers, Brunini Attorneys At Law

On November 17, 2025 the United States Environmental Protection Agency (the “EPA”) and United States Department of the Army (the “Army”) and along with the EPA referred to herein as the “Agencies”) published a proposed rule revising the regulations defining the scope of waters federally covered by the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, as amended, also known as the Clean Water Act, in light of the United States Supreme Court’s decision in *Sackett v. Environmental Protection Agency*, 598 U.S. 651 (2023). The Agencies are seeking to provide clarity on the definition of “waters of the United States.” A forty-five (45) day comment period began on November 20, 2025, when the proposed rule was published in the Federal Register.

“This proposed revision to the definition of ‘waters of the United States’ is intended to adhere faithfully to the Supreme Court’s direction, respect the Act’s careful balance between Federal authority and State responsibilities over waters, and to carry out Congress’ overall objectives to restore and maintain the integrity of the Nation’s waters in a manner that preserves the traditional sovereignty of States over their own land and water resources pursuant to the cooperative federalism framework predicated by the Act. The agencies believe the proposed revised definition would also ensure clarity and predictability for Federal agencies, States, Tribes, the regulated community, and the public, including by proposing to add definitions of ‘relatively permanent’ and ‘continuous surface connection’ for the first time to the agencies’ regulations and by re-establishing definitions for ‘ditch,’ ‘tributary,’ ‘prior converted cropland,’ and ‘waste treatment system’ to ensure clear boundaries that indicate the distinction of Federal versus State and Tribal coverage of waters. Ultimately, the proposed rule is intended to ensure that the agencies are operating within the scope of the Federal Government’s authority over navigable waters under the Clean Water Act and the Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution.”

The proposed rule seeks to restore the Clean Water Act’s provisions ensuring that States and Tribes retain authority over their land and water resources. “It is hard to see how the States’ role in regulating water resources would remain ‘primary’ if the EPA had jurisdiction over anything defined by the presence of water.” It also preserves the primary State responsibility over ordinary land use decisions.

Under the terms of the Agencies’ proposed rule, the term “waters of the United States” would include “(1) traditional navigable waters and the territorial seas, (2) most impoundments of ‘waters of the United States,’ (3) relatively permanent tributaries of traditional navigable waters, the territorial seas, and impoundments, (4) wetland adjacent (i.e. having a continuous surface connection) to traditional navigable waters, territorial seas, impoundments, and tributaries, and (5) lakes and ponds that are relatively permanent and have a continuous surface connection to traditional navigable waters, the territorial seas, or a tributary.”

The proposed rule removes the category of “interstate waters” from the definition of “waters of the United States.” The Agencies did so

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John Milner serves as counsel to the Mississippi Poultry Association and has special expertise in poultry-related environmental issues. Partner Gene Wasson also has impressive abilities in the environmental sector. Partner Trey Jones has significant environmental litigation experience.

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because their regulatory authority under the Clean Water Act is limited to “navigable waters.” “The Agencies propose that regulating all interstate waters—from isolated ponds to ephemeral washes—regardless of their connection to navigability would impermissibly read the term navigable waters out of the statute.”

The proposed rule defines “relatively permanent” waters as “standing or continuously flowing bodies of surface water that are standing or continuously flowing year-round or at least during the wet season.” Ephemeral waters (i.e. those with surface water flowing or standing only in direct response to precipitation) are not jurisdictional because they are not relatively permanent. The phrase “at least during the wet season” is intended to include extended periods of predictable, continuous surface hydrology in the same geographic location year after year.

The Agencies propose to define “tributary” to mean “a body of water with relatively permanent flow, and a bed and bank, that connects to a downstream traditional navigable water or the territorial seas, either directly or through one or more waters or features that convey relatively permanent flow.” A “tributary” does not include a body of water that contributes surface water flow to a downstream jurisdictional water through a feature such as a culvert, dam, tunnel, or similar artificial or natural feature, if such feature does not convey relatively permanent flow.

Under the proposed rule wetlands and relatively permanent lakes and ponds “must have a continuous surface connection to a water of the United States” to fall under the Agencies jurisdiction. “Continuous surface connection” is defined as “having surface water at least

during the wet season and abutting a jurisdictional water.” Thus the proposed rule provides a two prong test for determining what is a continuous surface connection: (1) must abut/touch a jurisdictional water, and (2) have surface water at least during the wet season.

The Agencies propose a number of exclusions from “waters of the United States: waste treatment systems, prior converted cropland, certain ditches, and groundwater. Waste treatment systems are defined to “include all components of a waste treatment system designed to meet the requirements of the Clean Water Act, including lagoons and treatment ponds, designed to either convey or retain, concentrate, settle, reduce, or remove pollutants, either actively or passively, from wastewater prior to discharge (or eliminating any such discharge).” “Ditches (including roadside ditches) constructed or excavated entirely in dry land are not waters of the United States.” Groundwater is excluded because it is not a navigable water as required by the Clean Water Act. Prior converted cropland cannot be a wetland unless it has been abandoned for greater than five years and it has actually reverted to a wetland.

Hopefully the proposed rule will remove the federal regulatory overreach which has occurred all too often in recent years, and will limit federal jurisdiction under the Clean Water Act to traditional navigable waters. ■

¹ Updated Definition of “Waters of the United States,” Federal Register, Vol. 90, No. 222, P. 52498 (Nov. 20, 2025).² Rapanos v. United States, 547 U.S. 715, at 755-756.³ Id. at P. 52514.⁴ Id. at p. 52516.⁵ Id.⁶ Id. at p. 52517.⁷ Id. at p. 52518.⁸ Id. at p. 52521.⁹ Id.¹⁰ Id. at p. 52527.¹¹ Id.¹² Id.¹³ Id. at p. 52533.¹⁴ Id. at p. 52534.¹⁵ Id. at p. 52538.¹⁶ Id. at p. 52541.¹⁷ Id. at p. 52536. “Prior converted cropland” means “any area that, prior to December 23, 1985, was drained or otherwise manipulated for the purpose, or having the effect, of making production of an agricultural product possible. EPA and the Corps will recognize designations of prior converted cropland made by the Secretary of Agriculture. An area is no longer considered prior converted cropland for purposes of the Clean Water Act when the area is abandoned and has reverted to wetlands, as defined in paragraph (c)(1) of this Section. Abandonment occurs when prior converted cropland is not used for, or in support of, agricultural purposes at least once in the immediately preceding five years.” 33 C.F.R. & 328.3(a)(7).



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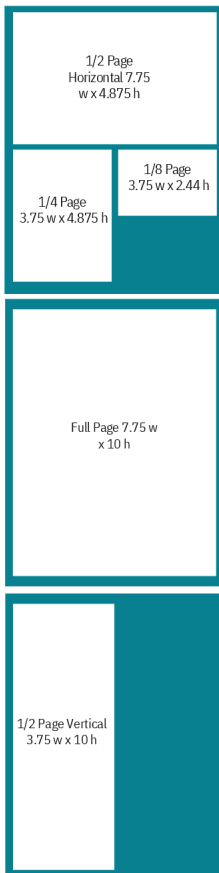
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AD SUBMISSION GUIDELINES



Accepted File Formats:

- PDF or JPEG only.
- No other file formats will be accepted.

Color and Layout:

- All ads will be printed in full color.
- Document size must match the exact size of the ad.
- Ads are not designed to bleed to the edge of the page.
- Bleed and crop marks are not required.

File Preparation:

- All fonts and photos must be embedded.
- Photos should be at least 300 DPI.
- All colors must be CMYK.
- Spot colors should be converted to CMYK.
- Photos should be at least 300 DPI.

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- All fonts and photos must be embedded.
- Photos should be at least 300 DPI.
- All colors must be CMYK.
- Spot colors should be converted to CMYK.
- Photos should be at least 300 DPI.

File Naming:

- Name files clearly for easy identification (include ad size, company name, etc.).

Printing Disclaimer:

- Ads will be printed as submitted. Neither MPA nor the printing company is responsible for errors, typos, or artwork that produces low print quality.

AD SUBMISSION DEADLINE

TARGET DISTRIBUTION DATE

• Quarter 1	February 28th	March
• Quarter 2	May 30th	June
• Quarter 3	August 29th	September
• Quarter 4	November 25th	December

AD SIZES

- **Full Page:** 7.75" w x 10" h
- **1/2 Page (horizontal):** 7.75" w x 4.875" h
- **1/2 Page (vertical):** 3.75" w x 10" h
- **1/4 Page:** 3.75" w x 4.875" h
- **1/8 Page:** 3.75" w x 2.44" h

MEMBER	NON-MEMBER	DISCOUNT
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\$500	\$650	When purchasing an ad in all 4 QTRS and paid in full by March 31st you will receive a 10% discount. Unpaid balances after the deadline result in loss of discount.
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\$300	\$400	
\$150	\$200	
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UPCOMING EVENTS:



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| JAN 6 | 2026 Legislative Session Begins
<i>State Capitol - Jackson, MS</i> | APR 9 | Beef & Poultry Expo
<i>Fairground - Laurel, MS</i> |
| JAN 27-29 | International Production & Processing Expo
<i>Georgia World Congress Center-Atlanta, GA</i> | MAY 19-20 | Poultry Management School
<i>MSU Poultry Science-Starkville, MS</i> |
| FEB 19 | Top Restaurant Announced
<i>Coliseum, State Fairgrounds-Jackson, MS</i> | AUG 5 | Breeder Hatchery Seminar
<i>Thames Copiah-Lincoln CC-Wesson, MS</i> |
| FEB 25 | Poultry Health Seminar
<i>Woodall Center, Pearl River CC, Hattiesburg, MS</i> | SEP 17-20 | MPA Convention
<i>Hilton Sandestin-Miramar Beech, FL</i> |
| MAR 19-20 | MS Women for Ag Conference
<i>Cleveland, MS</i> | | |



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