



January 6, 2023

## Avian Influenza & ArFB State Convention Recap

It was great seeing so many of you at State Convention and I hope everyone found the poultry meeting informative. It is our goal to continue division conversations as issues arise. For those who were unable to attend State Convention the poultry division met to update our membership on proposed federal rules on Packers and Stockyards, as well as having Livestock & Poultry and Arkansas Game & Fish speak about recent outbreaks of avian influenza in migratory birds. Both issues are very important to our membership and our state. Several individuals asked that we follow up with a recap of the meeting to those that were at the meeting as well those who were unable to attend.

### Avian Influenza

Patrick Fisk with Livestock and Poultry and Jennifer Ballard with Arkansas Game & Fish spoke about avian influenza (AI) being found in migratory birds in eastern Arkansas. Migratory birds, especially waterfowl, are a natural reservoir of the avian influenza virus; they carry and exchange different virus strains along their migration routes, leading to the emergence of novel High Path AI viruses. This makes AI one of the largest threats to domestic birds like poultry. No matter when found, outbreaks of AI typically lead to depopulating of entire poultry houses. All domestic birds are at risk, including backyard birds. To combat AI, farmers need to ensure proper biosecurity measures are in place. A USDA website provides several resources for farmers to "Defend the Flock." Information includes biosecurity toolkits, checklist reminders, and guides for new hires. The site also provides translated versions to help assure non-English-speaking farmers and workers have access to the same information. The website can be found at the following link: [www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/defend-the-flock-program/dtf-resources/dtf-resources](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/defend-the-flock-program/dtf-resources/dtf-resources).

Arkansas is one of the largest poultry producers in the country and its economic importance cannot be overlooked. It is important to provide consistent and accurate information to the media and our legislators on the issue. If you are contacted by anyone from the media or your legislator, we would offer our public relation's department as a resource for assistance prior to any interviews or meetings. Steve Eddington, our Vice President of Public Relations, can help initiate support and guidance from his team. His cell number is (501) 912-6559.

Obviously, the issue of AI is a critical issue for poultry growers, so please feel free to share this information with your neighbors, even if they are not Farm Bureau members.

### Packers and Stockyards

Hal Crocker with USDA Packers and Stockyards discussed two new draft rules. The first is the Transparency in Poultry Grower Contracting and Tournaments proposal. USDA says the intent of the rule is to "revise the list of disclosures and information live poultry dealers must furnish to poultry growers and sellers with whom dealers make poultry growing

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arrangements.” The comment period for the proposed rule has closed and is waiting to be finalized. A link to the rule can be found on the USDA website at: [www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/transparency-poultry-grower-contracting-and-tournaments](http://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/transparency-poultry-grower-contracting-and-tournaments).

The second proposed rule Mr. Crocker discussed is the Inclusive Competition and Market Integrity Under the Packers and Stockyards Act. USDA states the rule is “intended to prohibit undue prejudice, unjust discrimination, and deception to provide for clearer, more effective standards to govern the modern marketplace”. The comment period for the proposed rule has been extended to Jan. 17. The rule and ability to comment can be found at the following link: [www.ams.usda.gov/content/usda-extending-comment-period-proposed-rule-support-equitable-access-and-competition](http://www.ams.usda.gov/content/usda-extending-comment-period-proposed-rule-support-equitable-access-and-competition).



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