Kosher (literally, Hebrew for “fit”) refers to food that is permitted for eating for those of the Jewish faith. The rules governing kosher food are extremely detailed and govern most every aspect of food harvesting or processing and preparation.

Why is food processing, particularly food which is derived from animals, so carefully prescribed by Jewish law? Why should Jewish people bother to follow laws that are inexplicably complex?

One reason is that the Jewish food laws are a means of imposing rules on the common and mundane activity of eating in order to invest the activity of eating with deeper meaning and religious opportunity. Another reason is that Jewish tradition provides that while we are permitted to eat meat, one should only do so if the person has a strong desire for the meat. Perhaps because of the bother and annoyance of the process of obtaining kosher meat, a person’s desire for meat will be restrained. Yet another reason is that we are required to follow the laws regarding kosher food, even if the reasons for the laws cannot be fully understood, because they are divine commandments.

Processing of kosher poultry is subject to complex rules of Jewish law known as kashrut. A chicken is a kosher animal, but for its meat to be kosher, kashrut requires that the bird be processed in a specific manner. In this article, I will broadly outline the rules regarding kosher poultry processing.

Kosher Breeds and Growing the Poultry
Kosher poultry must be derived from species of birds which are considered kosher. Most common breeds of birds are considered kosher, including chicken, turkey, duck and goose. However, predatory birds or birds of prey, such as a hawks, eagles, owls and vultures are not kosher species.

The rules of kashrut do not affect the manner in which the bird is

Continued on page 8
The APPPA Grit! newsletter is published six times a year and sent to members of APPPA. To join, visit our website or write us. Information provided in this newsletter is believed to be accurate, but readers assume all responsibility for actions based on this information.

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The Coordinator’s Corner

Happy New Year everyone. I imagine things on your farms are a lot like things at APPPA these days—production season slowed down for most of us, it is time to take care of the business end of things. All those little details that drift when you are too busy working to really think. We’ve been taking care of a lot of business at APPPA!

You will notice in the article on page 11 that we are reopening the due date of the APPPA survey. The information is so valuable that we hope to get more members participating. Please fill yours out today.

You will also see on page 17 that we have 2 board member openings and one board member up for reelection. The board has decided to hold an uncontested election this year, as we again have great candidates and hate to turn anyone away. However, if you have strong feelings that there is someone else out there you think should be on the board, feel free to get your APPPA friends together and nominate them. That process will open up a ballot election. This process is more clearly explained on page 17.

Generally in the winter we print a listing of all APPPA members who have given permission to be listed in our “Producer Network.” The function of this public listing is to help other members in your area locate you for networking. Your name is NOT published unless you specifically give us permission to do so. I plan to run that directory in the March–April issue. Those with computer access can go to www.apppa.org/producers.htm to see if they are listed— if your info isn’t there it means that we don’t have a record of your giving us permission. If you would like to be listed and don’t see your name already on the list, send an email to grit@apppa.org by Feb. 28. Those without computer access can leave a phone message or write a note to let me know that you’d like to be listed in the print edition.

Eli Reiff contacted me to make a correction in the article on the September field day at his farm. I wrote that his compost ages for six weeks, but he reminded me that it needs to compost for SIX MONTHS. Eli said “People will be pretty unhappy if they start tossing undigested animal body parts out onto the field.” Agreed!

Lastly, I would like to thank our two retiring board members for their service to APPPA. Summer Steenbarger was a newer member of the board, but needed to leave due to increased responsibilities with some exciting local food initiatives. Summer was the board secretary and made some great contributions in her time with us.

Charles Ritch was on the APPPA board for seven years, and was a loyal and stalwart contributor to the organization. We will miss his wry humor and willingness to do what needed to get done. Charles was the APPPA board President for the last year.

Thanks to both of their contributions to APPPA.
Jody Padgham, APPPA Coordinator

APPPA - STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The American Pastured Poultry Producers Association (APPPA) is a nonprofit educational and networking organization dedicated to encouraging the production, processing, and marketing of poultry raised on pasture.

APPPA exists to facilitate the free flow of creative ideas. Member producers are encouraged to consider all poultry species and all pasturing models, assuming personal responsibility for adapting ideas and models presented through APPPA.

APPPA passionately embraces humane, people-friendly, environmentally-enhancing, pasture-based production models. While we respect the freedom of others to engage in industrial confinement factory farming, we believe our approach is superior.

APPPA assists both producers and consumers to transact business with as little government intervention as possible. APPPA does not discriminate in membership or programs based on the business size of producer or consumer. Realizing that production models must be profitable to be successful, APPPA’s interests include processing, packaging, cooking, marketing, and any other topics related to pastured poultry enterprises.

APPPA’s world vision is to see pastured poultry adopted as the model for environmentally, emotionally, and economically sensible poultry production. This vision includes decentralized food systems, farmstead-sized processing, and as much interaction as possible between producer and consumer.

(Adopted by the APPPA Steering Committee, August 27, 1997)
From the President
Happy New Year 2010!

Can you imagine, we are now 10 years down the road from the so-called Y2K scare. By the time you read this the year won’t be exactly new anymore, a little like taking a new car off the lot.

Winter is indeed a time for the farm and the land to rest. This farm actually looks like a giant bed, with the mountain to the north like a headboard and the smaller ridge to the south for a footboard, and blanketed with snow. The other day the winds were climaxing at 50 mph, testing our pastured poultry pens. The Salatin-style pen sits low and wouldn’t budge, the flat farm wagon that we use for day-ranging didn’t move, but the taller Plamondon pen was not anchored and it flipped about five times. Even so, this is my wife’s favorite pen, because she can walk right in it.

Our layers are the only chickens on the farm this time of year and they are laying well. Especially since we wormed them. Trying to raise chickens on a farm where we are exposed to numerous custom processing customers puts us in jeopardy for parasites, lice and respiratory diseases. At least we have something to blame our problems on! Thanks to old and new members alike for your ongoing support!

Acting President, Eli Reiff

Past President Charles Ritch resigned his position in November, 2009. The APPPA Board of Directors wishes to thank Charles Ritch for his seven years of tireless service to this organization. His passion for raising pastured poultry has been an inspiration to many, and his willingness to share his vast knowledge has been immensely helpful to novice and seasoned producer alike. While we will miss his good humor and wise counsel during future board meetings, the legacy of his service will continue to serve APPPA for many years to come. Thanks to Charles for all that he have given to make APPPA a better organization. We wish him continued success in this great adventure we are all engaged in.
Building a Simple Cold Storage Unit
By Tim Koegel, Windy Ridge Poultry, NY

At this time of the year most of you would probably rather be thinking about the first warm days of spring rather than cold storage, as would I. But now is the time for planning the harvest of our summertime efforts. Successful cold storage can be an important part of ensuring product quality after your harvest. Most of those who have been in the business for awhile have some arrangement for cold storage, choosing from a wide variety of options.

For the reasons outlined above, I opted to build my own cold storage unit. I happened to have an available steel intermodal container, or dry van (“container”), but had no available space inside a building. These containers are about as vermin proof as anything. After searching for some time, I wasn’t able to find a used prebuilt insulated box that would fit inside, so I had to build my own. The following outlines my path to a cost effective and efficient cold storage unit.

The Options

**Used walk-in coolers** - Many walk-ins require a building or shelter or at least a concrete pad, which I didn’t have available. If you are patient you can often pick these up at a very affordable price.

**Trucks** - You can get a very nice used class 7 or 8 heavy duty truck (CDL required) with a reefer body for under $20,000. A good place to start looking is truckpaper.com. A one-ton van with a refrigerated compartment will cost about the same but will provide only a fraction of the storage / transport space. Options to consider on a truck:

- Door/lift gate configurations, powered by the truck or an auxiliary engine, standby electric (usually 3-phase which is not available at my location), and more. While this option adds transport capability to the business, it was more of a financial burden than I wanted to take on at the moment and more than I needed. If you are considering this don’t forget to add the cost for a licensed operator, insurance, fuel, maintenance and highway use taxes, if applicable.

**Semi trailers** - You can find good used reefer trailers for under $4000. Most will require 3 phase for stand-by electric. A diesel engine can be noisy and be another engine to maintain, and often they are fuel hogs. They are versatile and may be partitioned to offer cooling / freezing or change or reduce conditioned space to reduce energy consumption. Hard to move, not portable, not very efficient, not for me.

**Renting space in a cold storage facility** - My first choice if available, but we simply don’t have any within an hour drive.

**Design and Budget**

I had an advantage in that I am very familiar with building highly insulated homes. For the average person, a little time on the web will provide you with a lot of information. It is critical to understand the concepts of thermal bridging, and obey the rules. (*ed note: A thermal bridge is a component in a building envelope through which heat is transferred at a substantially higher rate than through the surrounding envelope area. Check the term on the web to get more information!*)

The first course of business is design. Figure out the space you have to work with and calculate the ideal size of the insulated “box.” On my project, I did not build the box tight inside the container. Having some extra space allows for a means to inspect around the box, as well as leaving some room for adjustment as you try to line up the holes for the cooling unit. And hey, who can’t use a little extra storage space?

Calculate your materials list and make sure this will be within your budget.

- **Container** - $800 (auction) to $1800 (repainted, refurbished)
- **Refrigerated box** - $1400 (6x8x7’ outside dimensions)
- **Inside “Skin”** - $100 - Corrugated plastic provides a sanitizable surface
- **Refrigeration System** - $700-$800 for Cool-Bot and a new LG 18k btu A/C.
- **Electrical** - $400-500 for inside and out-
side electric including an auxiliary venting system and freeze protection

Freezers – $700 (One 14 cu’ and one 30 cu’ chest freezer, both new)

Total - $4100 - $5300

The Cooling Unit

After careful consideration of the options I elected to use an air conditioner and a Cool-Bot (www.storeitcold.com). The advantages of this setup are a low capital expense, readily available components, a good warranty, energy efficiency, and that it is user installable. The Cool-Bot is the controller of the system and takes an ordinary air conditioning (A/C) unit and “fools” it into becoming a refrigeration unit. It is a simple and hardy design and the folks who sell it are nice to deal with. It has a 35 day return period, so it is relatively risk free. Heed their recommendations on A/C units to save yourself some grief. Even at the price of $299 for the Cool-Bot and $300-$400 for an A/C unit (18k btu rated for up to 96 sq’) it is a heck of a lot less than what a commercial system will cost and has a much better warranty. (My LG A/C unit has a 5 year warranty compared to 90 days – 1 year on a commercial setup).

When designing your setup you’ll need to decide whether to vent the A/C unit to the inside or outside of the container. It is a little more work and a little trickier but I recommend venting directly to the outside.

The minimum insulation I would suggest is 4” of EPS (extruded polystyrene, R-value of 2.5 per inch). DO NOT use fiberglass. It takes too thick a wall to get the needed R value. The condensation line (the point in the wall where the temp reaches the dew point) will be inside the wall and if it is a porous material like fiberglass bats condensation may form inside the cooler wall, inducing rot and GREATLY reducing R-value. Fiberglass requires that a vapor barrier be carefully installed, and just isn’t worth the trouble on such a relatively small space.

The Box

I used a panelized box construction. I first constructed each panel (wall, floor or ceiling) flat on the floor of the container. (SIPs or “Structural Insulated Panels” would work great for this application as well). It was a bit tricky because of the 6” lip on the top edge on the double door end of the container. This meant I had to assemble the cooler “box” inside the container with only about one inch of clearance on the top once assembly was complete. The clearances were so tight because I wanted to use a full size door and needed to put the floor panel on 2-inch “sleepers” so that air can circulate under it. The wooden floor deck of these containers will wick moisture up through it if there isn’t a gap.

I built each side as a panel, and then assembled the “box.” I started by framing the outside perimeter of the panel on the floor of the container with 2”x4” dimensional lumber. “Square” the box, then add sheets of 7/16” Oriented Strand Board (OSB: strong, straight, cheap), laying them down, one at a time, on top of the perimeter frame.

After the first panel is down, add a 2x4” to the seam (flat side) where the next sheet will meet the first. This will join the sheets of OSB as well as providing a “nailer” for the inside panel. By the way, I only used screws. Flip the open top box over and fill it with the first layer of 1½” EPS (matches the 2x4” laid flat) making sure to foam all joints and edges with high density urethane
(HDU) foam in a can. (In a perfect world I would have someone spray the whole thing with 2lb+ closed cell polyurethane). Add the next layer of 2” EPS (total 3½” to match the 2x4”), foaming all joints and edges. Always overlap joints in the insulation, and never have joints in the same direction on top of one another. Attention to detail and filling voids and cavities is crucial to performance so take your time and do it right.

Now add a layer of ½” foil faced HDU insulating board. Extend the FF-HDU to the outside edges of the 2x4” perimeter frame. Now complete the panel by adding what will be the inside OSB skin of the panel. On the appropriate edges be sure to leave enough OSB to overlap the adjacent panel. This overlap is what ties one panel to the next. On the end with the door it is easiest to build the 2 sides as separate panels. Be sure to thoroughly foam all joints in the open gap before assembling. After building and assembling all the panels it is time to install the door.

The Door
I used a flush (no window) steel insulated entry door with a regular lockset (hung backwards so it opens outward). This allows for an additional layer of EPS applied to the inside of the door if needed, and won’t take up precious conditioned space with an inward swing. After it is installed foam all gaps with minimal expansion door and window foam.

The Cooling Unit
Measure and mark the inside wall, avoiding structural 2x4s if possible. Cut the hole big enough to line the opening with 1 inch material to trim it out. Cut the corresponding hole in the skin of the container and trim the opening out using angle iron. Mount the A/C unit and foam all gaps. Install the Cool-Bot as directed and plug it and the A/C unit in.

Finishing Touches
If you are looking to use your cooler in the winter (I store eggs), you’ll need auxiliary heat to protect against sub freezing outside temps. I use an electronic thermostat from Farmtek (# 102720). They aren’t inexpensive but they are versatile, precise and reliable with a remote temp sensor. I wire it to a duplex outlet inside the cooler and then plug in a small electric heater. It doesn’t take much of a heater (800/1500 watts) if you have built the cooler tight. Likewise, if not shaded, in milder temps these containers have massive solar gain and may be 40 degrees warmer than the outside air, so I highly recommend an active venting for sunny and/or summer days. I got an in-wall unit from my local lumber yard and another less expensive thermostat from Farmtek (#CR2095). I cut a small hole on the opposite end of the container for inlet air, screened it and put a rain shroud over it and installed the fan in one of the doors.

Line the floor of your box with EPDM (rubber roof membrane) and line the walls and ceiling with a sanitary material. I used corrugated plastic available from sign shops. Find some metal sanitary racks (Lowes offers some) and set them up. I also added a remote electronic thermometer (Timex for $9 each) and installed it, allow-
ing me to check temp without opening the door.

Turn the cooling unit on for at least 24 hours before putting product in. This allows the chilling of the thermal mass and moderates the temp when entering the cooler. When shutting it down leave the door closed for 48 hours to prevent warm air from condensing on the colder surfaces. For access to the container I installed a steel door with a wooden jamb that works well.

**Additional Suggestions**

Buy a new A/C unit. I got an LG 18k BTU unit for about $350 from the Home Depot. The unit has a 5-year warranty, much longer than any commercial refrigeration unit has. 18k BTU should service a walk-in of 96 sq ft or less. Losing a cooler full of food isn’t worth the hundred bucks you will have saved on the used A/C unit.

Build your box tightly to be able to maintain temperature and for faster energy payback. Don’t scrimp on construction or materials. Payback will be quick on good design and construction and will keep paying back for many years. It will also allow the cooling unit to maintain those needed temps on hot summer days. Learn, understand and obey the rules of thermal bridging.

Some may qualify for FSA loans. There is a USDA “Know your famer, know your food” funding opportunity for cold storage at: [http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=prsu&topic=flp-fp](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=prsu&topic=flp-fp). There are eligibility requirements and meat storage alone may not qualify. If you produce and look to store produce also then it may qualify.

Would I build this cold storage box again? Absolutely. I use it a lot for long and short term storage; from potatoes to eggs and broilers to late-fall venison. It provides a great system to chill poultry and let it age for 24-36 hours before freezing it. I believe this aging period really makes a difference in the taste, texture and tenderness of our birds. It is a great place to dry-age some venison in the fall.

A small onsite cold storage unit of your own improves food safety and product quality, and makes your operation more productive, three factors critical to the success of any small farm.


If you have any questions you can email me at timk@windyridgepoultry.com.

**Tim farms with his family in Alfred, New York.**

*Ed note: If selling products to the public you will want to check your state food safety laws to understand regulations on storage temperatures and joint storage of meat and non-meat items.*
Kosher... from page one

raised. Poultry intended for kosher consumption may be raised in the same manner as any other poultry. In the United States, with few exceptions, all of the poultry raised for kosher consumption are raised in confined feeding operations.

One important caveat to the means of raising the birds is that the kashrut laws require that the bird be healthy at the time of slaughter. If a bird appears sick, has recently died or is injured, then the bird is not fit for kosher slaughter. Injuries which may render the bird unkosher include those resulting from attacks of other animals. For example, if a turkey was attacked by a raccoon and survived but lost an eye in the attack, the bird may be healthy but would not be considered kosher.

Pastured poultry are particularly amenable to these kashrut requirements because of the inherent well-being of the birds. Pastured poultry are nourished by fresh air, sunshine and diverse forage. The birds are permitted their natural physical activities and consequently develop strong skeletal and muscular systems.

Slaughter
Kosher slaughter is designed to be swift, painless and as humane as possible. The first requirement of kosher poultry processing is that slaughter be performed by a knowledgeable person in the proper manner. A shochet is an individual specifically trained in the intricacies of kosher slaughter, known as shechita. A shochet studies the particular laws followed by practice in shechita and supervision by a recognized teacher. After completing the prescribed learning, a shochet is permitted to slaughter animals intended for kosher consumption.

Shechita is performed with a perfectly smooth, incredibly sharp blade. The shochet is obligated to check the blade frequently to ensure that it remains sharp and without any flaws. The cut to the bird's neck is made in one swift motion so that the trachea, esophagus and neck arteries are all severed at the same moment. The swift and smooth slaughter causes the bird to become unconscious within seconds.

The laws of shechita are intended to emphasize humane slaughter of animals and avoid inflicting needless pain. Several things can render the slaughter unkosher, including movement of the animal's head, a cut which fails to sever the trachea or esophagus completely or a blade which is found to have a nick. No stunning or other method of incapacitating the animal prior to the shechita is permitted.

After the shechita, the bird is placed in a cone to drain the blood.

Defeathering
The laws of kashrut prohibit consumption of the blood of an animal. These requirements are derived from several verses of the Torah (the Pentateuch, the first section of the Old Testament). Genesis 9:3-4 states “Every creature that lives shall be yours to eat; as with the green grasses, I give you all these. You must not, however, eat flesh with its life-blood in it.” Deuteronomy 12:23-25 provides, in part, “But make sure that you do not partake of the blood; for the blood is the life, and you must not consume the life with the flesh.” In kosher poultry processing (and in processing of other meats for kosher consumption), the blood of the animal must be drawn out completely.

In typical poultry processing, after a bird is slaughtered, it is then scalded in hot water. The hot water loosens the feathers for easy removal. However, in kosher processing, it is not permitted to use heat (such as from the hot water) at this point in processing because the hot water would cause the meat to cook before the blood is fully removed. A process of soaking in fresh water and salting, as further described, is used to draw out the blood from the meat.

Because of the prohibition on heating, the feathers must be removed by another means. In industrial settings, feathers are often removed via a chemical application. Alternatively, the feathers may be removed
by dry plucking. Dry plucking rarely results in a perfectly clean bird and additional plucking by hand is often required later in the cleaning process. Once the feathers are removed, the bird is checked for any defects that could render the bird unfit for kosher consumption.

Checking for Defects
There are several defects that, even if the shechita is performed properly, could render the bird unfit for kosher consumption. These defects include leg problems, missing or defective internal organs and other injuries or sickness.

Leg problems include any broken legs or torn or bruised sinew. Among pastured poultry these defects are rare. However, in factory settings these defects can be significant as poultry breeds are typically selected for fast growth and large size, both of which contribute to skeletal weakness. Additionally, rough handling during catching and transport exacerbate these leg injuries.

Birds are also checked for defects of the internal organs. In particular, the intestines are examined for holes or other defects. After defeathering, the cavity of the chicken is opened and the intestines are removed. A person knowledgeable in kosher supervision, known as a mashgiach, examines the intestines for any holes or blood clots. If a hole exists in the intestines or there is any blood found in the intestines, then the bird is unkosher.

After the intestines are checked, the bird is gutted and the head and feet are removed. The neck, stomach, liver, heart and feet may be may be further prepared for kosher consumption.

Soaking and Salting
Each piece of the bird intended for kosher consumption (except the liver, which undergoes a different process) must then undergo soaking and salting. This is intended to remove any extraneous blood of the animal which is prohibited in kosher meat. The process of soaking and salting is known as kashering.

Prior to soaking, the bird is checked carefully to ensure that the entire cavity is clean, particularly to ensure that there are no remaining pieces of the lungs or kidneys. The bird is then soaked in cold water, undisturbed, for thirty minutes. After the prescribed time, the bird is removed from the water and covered completely, inside and out, with coarse kosher salt. The salted bird is then set to rest, undisturbed, for one hour.

After one hour, the salt is removed by dunking the bird in three separate tubs of water. Following this last dunking, the blood of the poultry is considered to have been removed and the meat is deemed kosher. The poultry may then be cooked (following additional kashrut rules) and eaten.

Certification
Kosher poultry is certified by a person or agency which provides supervision to ensure that the kosher procedures have been complied with. In the United States, there are multiple certification agencies which provide kosher supervision and certification. Consumers will examine the packaging to ensure an appropriate certification.
Examinaing Kashrut More Broadly

In the strictest sense, kashrut, relative to poultry refers only to the means of processing and the methods of cooking. However, I believe that kashrut is more than this – kashrut is a call to responsibility. We must look beyond the technical steps of processing and undertake additional measures to scrutinize what is fit for kosher consumption.

A growing number of Jews believe that kashrut requires us to examine the environmental impact of our food choices. Kosher poultry is typically raised in confined feeding operations which leech pollutants into our soil, groundwater, rivers and oceans. Such operations are the epitome of poor animal treatment and contribute to the problems of food contamination and the overuse of antibiotics.

In thanking God for our food, it is traditional for Jews to recite a verse from Deuteronomy 8:10, “When you have eaten and you are satisfied, give thanks to the Lord your God for the good land which God has given you.” This recognition of God’s creations resonates in the natural cycle of pastured poultry. Pastured poultry is part of a cycle in which the sun feeds the grasses, the grasses feed the poultry, and the poultry fertilizes and renews the land. From its inherent sustainability, pastured poultry provides a respectable alternative for kosher consumers.

Jewish tradition further requires us to examine the conditions in which food is grown and processed. Recently, poor labor practices at many industrial plants have been exposed as unjust and, in certain cases, illegal. Kosher eaters today are increasingly taking note of the labor practices involved in food production. Pastured poultry, which is typically grown on sustainable farms and processed in small batches in non-industrialized settings is a responsible alternative for conscientious kosher consumers.

Finally, Jewish tradition requires us to respect our bodies. Each person is created in the image of God and we are obligated to be mindful to of the food we consume which is vital to our well-being. Pastured poultry offers a healthy choice in every delicious bite, reminding us of the good taste of Jewish tradition.

Ariella lives in Cleveland, Ohio with her husband and three children, where she is the owner of Green Pastures Poultry. During 2009, with The Green Taam, Ariella coordinated kosher processing with growers in Middlefield, Ohio to produce delicious, kosher pastured chicken, duck and turkey. Green Pastures Poultry endeavors to develop broad audiences for pastured poultry, including kosher and other religious specialties. In addition, Ariella provides consulting services for groups wishing to process kosher pastured poultry. Ariella graduated from New York Law School and practiced law for many years before finding her passion in local agriculture. Contact Ariella at GreenPasturesPoultry@gmail.com. Visit the web site at www.GreenPasturesPoultry.net.
The 2010 APPPA Member Survey
By Jody Padgham

Thanks to everyone who filled out an APPPA member survey. To show our appreciation, you will see on your "renew by" printed in the address label that your APPPA membership has been extended by one free issue of GRIT. The winner of the FREE YEAR OF PRODUCER PLUS MEMBERSHIP IS: Mark Biaggi of LaLuna Farm, in Manchester, California. Congratulations Mark!

As I sat down on this cold January morning (3 degrees at 9am - good egg freezing weather!) to report on the APPPA member survey I realized that I was feeling disappointed. Very grateful to the 43 members who each took 20 minutes to fill out the survey, but very disappointed in the 581 who didn't. It didn't seem like that much to ask, to collect some basic information about our membership. But, for whatever reason, 93% of you decided it wasn't a worthwhile thing to do.

I had planned on publishing an analysis of the results in this issue, but although full of very interesting information, our small sample is not representative of the whole by any means. I will tell you about a few trends, but would like to reopen the survey and try to entice more of you to participate.

Our goal in collecting the survey information is to better understand who myself, as paid coordinator, and the volunteer board are working for, what your operations look like and what your needs are. We currently have no idea how many of you raise layers, or broilers, or are working with heirloom breeds. How important your poultry is to your financial bottom line, who in your family or community relies on the poultry for employment, what kind of markets and processing you use. What your biggest challenges are, what you think of APPPA, and how we can better serve your needs.

As I grow older I better understand that you only get what you want if you ask, and so I AM ASKING. Please take 20 minutes to tell us a little about your poultry operation so that we can better serve your needs. I am reprinting the survey in this issue, and will again offer one free GRIT issue added to your current membership if we get your survey back with your name enclosed (though your name is not required if you prefer to complete the survey anonymously). We will understand if there are questions you don't want to answer for whatever reason, but please tell us what you are comfortable sharing. I will extend the survey deadline until February 28. I will also post the survey on the front of the APPPA webpage (www.apppa.org) as a downloadable pdf for those who don't want to tear it out of this issue. (We have not made this survey into an online tool. In deference to our significant

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Continued on page 12
population of non-computer using members, we chose to just do a paper survey this time. In the future we may offer both. It shouldn’t take you more time with a pencil at the kitchen table than sitting in front of the computer.)

So, now that is off my chest, onto some trends. I will do more serious analyses after EVERYONE gets their survey in!

- Acres farmed ranged from zero to 2,000, with many at 1 to 2 acres, several in the 30-40 acre and numerous larger farms. 14 reporting rented land, many of these also owned some land.

- 28 farms raised cornish cross broilers, with the largest operation reporting 15,000 in 2009. 20 farms raised white or bronze turkeys (numbers from 4 to 5,000). 11 had heirloom chickens (25 to 1,500) but only 5 raised heirloom turkeys (500 was the largest). The majority of farms, 34, had layers, from only 5 up to 3,000 birds.

- Many used both a free range and moveable pen system, with 15 saying they had eggmobiles. 10 said they used free-range exclusively. 12 used pens exclusively, with no free-range. (Though this may have been a misleading question, as most free-range systems have a pen involved...)

- Many of the respondents were raising poultry for fun or for family food only. Few reported actually making any significant profit, and 75% had more than 20% of their family’s support from off-farm income. Many of those that did make money showed about a 50% net profit, but the question didn't specify if labor was included in the figure, so it is possible that a lot of this profit went to pay the farmer’s labor. The egg operations did seem to bring in larger incomes, but they also mentioned that work load or cost of labor was a challenge for them.
A few had been farming with poultry for many years, but most were less than 10 years in the business and many were 1-3 years in.

Only 10 of the 43 reported that a woman was the primary farmer, 2 reported both males and females ran the farm and the rest were run primarily by men. Many had several children helping with the poultry.

Surprising to me, most did on-farm processing. Some had inspected plants on the farm, most were uninspected. Those that did drive to a processor generally drove a long way, most more than 60 miles. A few processors submitted surveys, we could have customized some questions to fit them better and will do so next time.

About 30% carried liability insurance, none were certified organic, though a few said they could be.

The majority used on-farm markets. Only 6 farms sold wholesale, 7 to restaurants and 17 went to farmers markets. Most sold poultry products to someone, only 5 reported that they just grew poultry for their own families. One sold live birds only.

Other enterprises on the farm: beef for both home use and commercial was very widely reported, as was the production of hogs. Sheep are also common, and the production of vegetables for both home and commercial use. Some kind of field crop production was also common. Many also keep bees. A few do dairy or keep goats.

The primary challenges: Marketing, marketing, marketing! Also the number one suggestion for GRIT articles, so look for those coming up. Also tough are keeping costs low enough for reasonable pricing, and finding the time to do everything.

But, the support of spouses and children, as well as the very positive response by customers and consumers to the high quality products produced help to make all the work worthwhile. Customer support was certainly mentioned many times as a key factor contributing to success.

Many complemented APPPA on doing a great job, and recommend that we just keep up the good work. (THANKS!). A few mentioned specific projects, such as updating research on the processing laws for all the states.

Suggestions for GRIT articles were numerous and useful, many said they like the producer profiles, and asked for more about marketing techniques that others have found successful.

I found it really interesting to read about everyone’s farms, and several folks said that they enjoyed filling out the survey. Once we get more in I think we will have a very interesting collection of data that the board can chew on. If your farm data is not represented in this report, PLEASE TAKE 20 MINUTES TODAY TO FILL OUT THE SURVEY ON PAGES 21-22 and send it into the office by Feb 28th. We really are interested in learning about EVERYONE’S OPERATION.
You Don’t Always See it Coming!
By Jeff Mattocks

As some of you already know, molds and toxins are not always visible to the human eye. This year due to the extreme growing conditions in many areas there are higher incidences of mold formation on many grain crops. Early this last year there was a warning sent out by the Department of Agriculture about the high vomitoxin content of wheat and barley. This last fall a new warning was issued about corn and corn silage. Much of the corn did not dry down correctly, the ears stayed upright and untimely rains got in between the husks and kernels. The kernels were not able to dry out correctly, allowing for mold formation in the ears.

Below is a report sent out from Dairyland Labs in Wisconsin. I want to caution you to watch your poultry rations this year. Please keep your eyes open, or just get the forages tested and be safe. Initial warning signs of mycotoxin poisoning in your animals are: dysentery like manure, elevated somatic cell count, and poor reproductive performance. Helpful things for treating and warding off mycotoxin poisoning are Redmond Conditioner, Greensand, vinegar, extra dry hay, charcoal for severe cases and good probiotics such as RC Gold 4X, Invigor rate and Rumi Cult 40.

Corn Silage Tests Show Mold, Mycotoxins Present
Corn silage in a number of rain-ravaged states is testing positive for levels of molds and mycotoxins, warns Brian Steinlicht, technical director at Dairyland Labs, Arcadia, WI.

"I probably answer 40-50 calls a day on this," said Steinlicht during a Nov. 18 University of Illinois webinar on wet corn. He had compiled data on corn grain and corn silage samples sent to Dairyland for testing and presented his findings via the Web.

"Out of 307 corn silage samples, 21% came back with some level of fusarium mold in them and 11% with some form of aspergillus mold," Steinlicht said. States he gathered data from include Indiana, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa and North and South Dakota. Samples sent in were suspected of having mold or mycotoxin problems, he added.

"A lot of what we first saw were cladosporium-infested and fusarium-infested samples. We had a period where there was a brief freeze and the number of viable molds that came in was lower, though still fusarium and cladosporium. Then we had a warm-up and the mucor molds began to bloom ... and, most recently, we saw a fair amount of penicillium molds. It seems like, as the season goes on, the type of mold is changing."

Mold on corn doesn't necessarily mean it also contains mycotoxins, experts warn. And corn showing no mold may not be mycotoxin-free. But Steinlicht said that mycotoxins are showing up in some levels in corn silage he's tested using thin-layer chromatography.

"It's a perfect storm – the weather conditions and not getting the corn out are good breeding grounds for molds." So far, of 62 samples tested for vomitoxin, 55% tested positive at some level. A total of 46% of 28 samples tested positive for zearalenone. Sixteen samples tested for T2 toxin showed no positive results. Only 9% of 23 samples tested positive for aflatoxin.

Signs of toxin problems in dairy cows include loose fecal discharges; reduced microbial digestion, dry matter intake and fertility; hormonal changes; and immune suppression to disease challenges, said Mike Hutjens, University of Illinois extension dairy specialist.

Continued page 16
GRIT SCRATCHINGS

Toll-Free Help Desk for
Small Meat and Poultry Processors

WASHINGTON, December 7, 2009 - The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) announced the opening of its new small plant help-desk, which will provide for operators of small and very small meat, poultry and processed egg products establishments seeking help with agency requirements with direct access to knowledgeable staff specialists, helping small processors to reduce the time and expense of dealing with agency requirements.

The FSIS small plant help-desk will serve as a "one-stop shop" for plant owners and operators with questions. FSIS staff will assess callers' requests and provide information and guidance materials that best meet their needs. In situations where the answer is not readily available, the staff will research the issue and follow-up with the caller. As appropriate, the help-desk will provide a portal to other services.

The help-desk is open from 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. EST, Monday through Friday, excluding Federal holidays. Call (1-877-374-7435) or email InfoSource@fsis.usda.gov.

Scaly Leg Mites

Question: The scales of my chicken’s feet do not lay flat. Is this caused by scaly-leg mites?

Answer: Scaly-leg mites are a species of mites known as Knemidocoptes mutans. These mites burrow under the scales of the chicken's feet to eventually cause the scales to be lifted. In severe infestations, there can be a loss of the digits (toes). Treatment with ivermectin has been reported to reduce the severity of this infection in the flock. Your local veterinarian can assist you in developing a treatment plan for your bird(s). In addition, applying a petroleum-based jelly to the affected shanks and legs in an early stage of the infestation can assist in having the scales return to its original state. If left untreated, the infestation can progress and the scales will remain up turned or in severe cases, the toes can fall off. Hence, if you suspect a case of scaly-leg mites, it is important to diagnose and treat the bird(s) quickly. By Dr. Teresa Morishita, DVM, Ohio State University 4-H Poultry.

Great Poultry Resources

The Ohio State 4-H Poultry web page has lots of great questions, photos and columns on a diversity of poultry issues (like the one below on scaly leg mites). Check it out at: http://www.oardc.ohio-state.edu/4hpoultry/t02_pageview/Columns.htm

Help Build List of Meat Processors

In an effort to answer the common question "where can I find a meat processor?" the Niche Meat Processing Assistance Network (NMPAN) has created the following webpage: http://www.extension.org/pages/Find_a_Meat_Processor_Near_You_or_List_Your_Plant

This page contains all the state-specific processor lists a NMPAN research assistant could find. PLEASE HELP: If your state has a list of processors (or any subset) that is NOT listed here, send it to NMPAN. The page also describes a self-listing service for processors that we set up with Local Harvest. NMPAN also aims to add a national list of processors certified to handle organic livestock/meats -- if your state has a list, please send it too!

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Besides analyzing feeds, producers may want to consider using mycotoxin binders, Hutjens suggested during the webinar. For aflatoxin problems, he recommended clay-based compounds such as bentonite, zeolite and calcium aluminosilicate at 50-225 grams/cow/day. For feed infected with T2, DON and zearalenone toxins, he advocated yeast cell-wall extracts – also called glucomannans – at 10 grams/cow/day. "You may need to double up or triple up" on amounts, he said.

And beware of possible mycotoxin concentrations in distillers grains, Hutjens said. He advised producers to ask for test results before buying distillers grains this year.

Jeff Mattocks is an animal nutritionist and poultry specialist at the Fertrell Company.
APPPA Board Election

APPPA currently has two open board seats, plus one member running for reelection. The board has chosen to present an uncontested election, and are offering a unique voting mechanism. The Board is confident that the chosen slate of candidates will do a good job of leading APPPA into the future. We hope you agree. However, we welcome any additional recommendations for Board candidates. Enclosed below is a form which you may use to suggest a candidate of your choosing. (Please confirm with that person that they would like to run.) If we get more than 3 recommendations for any one additional candidate we will re-open the election and publish mail-in ballots for the contested election in the next issue of GRIT. If we don’t receive this minimum, we will call the election and declare the three candidates presented in this issue elected as new board members of APPPA. If you agree with the slate of candidates as presented, you don’t have to do anything and your support will be assumed. Contact Jody or any board member if you have questions. The election will close as of Feb 28, 2010, and a new board declared or the election re-opened.

2010 APPPA Board Candidates

Eli Reiff, Reiff Poultry Processing
(Incumbent, acting President)
Mifflinburg, PA
570-966-0769

Eli lives with his wife and three youngest children on a 56 acre farm in central PA. On their farm they have 13 beef cows with calves and 33 ewe sheep with lambs. Kathleen raises a home flock of pastured broilers and free range layers and a few turkeys.

Eli and his family are custom processors of about 55,000 chickens and 1,100 turkeys per year. They have now been processing poultry for 29 years! About nine years ago Eli designed his own line of poultry processing equipment called Poultry Man LLC. He has sold this equipment all over the U.S. and poultry people in several other countries.

Eli has served on the APPPA board for four years, the last year as Vice President. He is currently the acting President.

Michael Akey, Green Akeys Family Farm
Westminster, Maryland
michaelweaselo@mac.com  410-857-0357

I have one full season of poultry raising under my belt. In 2008 we started Green Akeys Family Farm near Westminster, Maryland, about an hour north of Baltimore. I grew out about 400 broilers, 30 turkeys, and have about 125 layers. We have a diversified farm with cattle, sheep, poultry, rabbits, occasionally hogs and 5 goats. We have a vegetable CSA and sell eggs at our local farmer’s market. I first got the farming bug after reading Eric Schlosser’s Fast Food Nation. Immediately after reading that, I found a CSA to join. The CSA distributed eggs from a neighboring farm that happened to be owned by David Smith, former APPPA President. I found my way to the PASA conference a couple of years ago and spent a day at Eli Reiff’s farm processing chickens. I had so much fun that I realized I could do that myself and within the year I had purchased an MPU from Poultryman, LLC, Eli’s company.

My wife works full time outside the farm. Prior to farming I was a stay-home dad for ten years and I have three children. Before that I earned a Bachelors in Psychology from the University of Illinois after spending five years in the US Marines fixing CH-53 helicopters. My grandfather did have

APPPA BOARD CANDIDATE NOMINATION

I would like to nominate an additional candidate for the APPPA Board of Directors

Name of Candidate: ______________________________________________________

Address (street, city, state, zip) ___________________________________________

Phone: __________________________ Email or web: __________________________

Your name: ____________________________________________________________

Please mail this form BEFORE Feb 28, 2010 to APPPA, PO Box 87, Boyd, WI 54726
a farm in Illinois in the first half of the last century. I suppose the farming gene skipped a generation!

My goal is to change the way we eat in this country. I feel that being a part of APPPA is a great way to work toward accomplishing that goal. I love to think about solving the big problems of sustainable agriculture and I think that APPPA can and should be a vocal proponent for a healthy, sustainable, alternative food system. I think APPPA should be taking a positive role in helping farmers navigate the various regulations that exist from state to state and perhaps take an active lobbying role as advocates for small producers as they work to gain access to markets.

Keith O’Neal, Pleasant Prairie Meats
Satanta, Kansas
meatguy@pleasantprairiemeats.com 620-276-6197

Our family lives on and operates a small farm in southwest Kansas that my grandfather purchased in 1926. We have been direct marketing meat since 1982 and added pastured poultry in 1995. We sell grass finished beef, meat goats, broilers, turkeys and eggs. In a typical year we’ll raise 1000 broilers, the maximum allowed in Kansas, unfortunately. We usually raise 75 turkeys in the fall, and my daughter keeps about 50 layers. We also have a mobile kitchen and we sell ready to eat foods at our local farmers market.

Some of my interests include alternative building designs and alternative energy. I enjoy recycling discarded items to build useful things for the farm. I also enjoy the yahoo APPPA group. I have learned a lot and hopefully have helped others.

There is more modern processing equipment used today. The processing and food safety information is now readily available. I would like to see the outdated state laws be changed that would allow a more reasonable and profitable number of birds to be processed on-farm.
Events of Interest

Jan 20-23 Southern SAWG Annual Conference, Chattanooga TN, 205-333-8504 www.ssawg.org

Jan 20-23 EcoFarm Conference. Asilomar, CA, 831-763-2111 http://eco-farm.org/efc/

Feb 4-6, Farming for the Future, PASA Conference, State College, PA. 814-349-9856
www.pasafarming.org

Feb 5-12, Networking Association for Farm Direct Marketing and Agritourism (NAFDMA) Convention 2010 Lancaster, PA www.nafdma.com/ 413-529-0386

Feb 9-11, Northern Plains Sustainable Ag Society’s Annual Winter Conference
Watertown, S.D, 701-883-4304 www.npsas.org/events.html

Feb 13, 27th Annual Small Farmers Conference Albany, GA 229-432-5799

Feb 19-20, Georgia Organics Annual Conference, Athens, GA
www.georgiaorganics.org/conference/index.php


Feb 27, APPPA Networking Meeting, MOSES OFC, 12:30-1:30 pm. La Crosse, WI. grit@apppa.org 888-662-7772

March 17-18, Midwest Poultry Federation Convention, St Paul, MN. 763-682-2171
www.midwestpoultry.com/

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Are you tired of piles of paper? APPPA GRIT is now available in an “electronic only” version to Producer Plus members!

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12. Record-Keeping and Insurance
13. The Good, the Bad and the Ugly
14. Resources

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TOTAL 631
APPPA Member Survey

January 2010

APPPA is interested in learning more about your poultry operation in order to better tailor our services and information to our membership. We will also use your answers to better understand and effectively answer questions about the pastured poultry industry. We will not share specific details about any operations with any outside party, all individual answers are confidential. Please answer all below that are relevant and comfortable.

If you return your survey by Feb 28, we will add one additional issue of GRIT to your current membership! (We will need your name in order to do this.)

Your name (optional, although needed for the free issue)
________________________________________________________________

When completed, fold and tape and add a stamp and drop in the mail by Feb 28, 2010. THANKS!

1. What state is your farm located in? ___________
2. How many people live on your farm? #Adults_____ # children_____ How many families? ___________
3. What age is/are your primary farmer/s? (number of each) Does your family use a computer?
   Below 20__ 20-40____ 40-50____ 50-60____ 60+_____ Yes___ No___
4. What is the gender of the person who spends the most time with the poultry?: F___ M____
5. What is the purpose of your farming operation (check all that apply)
   Hobby/fun___ Break even___ Additional income___ Family support___ Other (list)________
6. Is more than 20% of the family income from off-farm or non-ag work? Yes___ No___
7. How many years have you been raising poultry on pasture? ___________
8. How many acres do you farm? Owned_____ Rented____ Total_____
9. How many birds did you produce in 2009?
   Cornish x broilers____ White/bronze turkeys____ Laying hens____ Geese____
   Heirloom broilers____ Heirloom turkeys____ Ducks____ Other (list)______________
10. Mark all that you use in your poultry production:
    Free-range system____ Mobile pens____ Egg mobile____
11. How many people work with the poultry regularly? Family____ Non-family____
12. How many occasional workers help (less than 10 days per year) ______
13. What kind of processing do you use for meat birds? (check all that apply)
    On farm____ State Inspected____ Fed Inspected____ Non-inspected____
14. Approximately how far do you travel (round trip) for each processing trip? ___________
15. What markets do you use?(check all that apply) None___ CSA-type___ On-farm___
   Farmers Market____ Restaurant____ Retail____ Wholesale___ Other (list)______________
16. Does your farm carry product liability insurance? Yes___ No____ Can’t get it____
17. What is your estimated gross income from pastured poultry in 2009? ___________
18. What is your estimated net profit from pastured poultry in 2009? ___________
19. What percent of your total income comes from poultry? _______________________
20. Is your poultry certified organic? Yes___ No____
21. Do you plan to change your poultry operation within the next 5 years?
    Expand____ Reduce____ Not sure____ Other change (list)___________________________
22. What other farming ventures are on your farm? (mark all that apply)

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23. What are your biggest challenges to success? ____________________________________________
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24. What are your biggest contributors to success? ____________________________________________
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25. How can APPPA better serve your needs? ________________________________________________
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26. Suggestions for APPPA GRIT stories or columns: ____________________________________________
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Feel free to add anything else you’d like us to know, here or on an additional page.

Fold and tape, stamp and mail

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Boyd, WI 54726
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PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY  
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Please make any corrections as needed, including a current phone and email. Thanks!

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