

Chicken Wire

A Few Words from . . . **Georgia's Commissioner of Agriculture, GARY BLACK**



Gary Black was elected Commissioner of Agriculture in November of 2010. He replaces Tommy Irvin as the first new commissioner in forty years.

Background and philosophy

I come to the Department of Agriculture with a love of Georgia and its people. My professional life has been devoted to agriculture. The opportunity to continue to work for agriculture and farmers and all Georgians as the state Commissioner of Agriculture is an honor and a privilege.

Every experience leaves an impression that helps form who you are and gives you a foundation and a context for decisions you have to make. Having "hands-on" experience of farming and the agriculture industry in Georgia lends not only knowledge but understanding for what farmers and businesses face.

I look to my experience, and combine it with common sense, the Golden Rule and scientific facts when facing any situation or decision. Those last three are a good trio to rely on whether you are in agriculture or some other line of work. As Commissioner, I also go by laws of Georgia and the regulations of the Department for decisions of a legal or regulatory nature. My staff and I will treat everyone fairly and enforce regulations uniformly. *Cont. on pg 2*



USDA Takes Enforcement Actions in 2011

In examining USDA's enforcement actions in fiscal year 2011, UPGA has found 24 formal complaints under the Packers and Stockyards Act. The responsible agency, GIPSA (Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyards Administration), has issued these formal complaints alleging specific violations of the Act against a firm or individual(s). It's important to note that these are alleged violations and each respondent has a right to a hearing before an Administrative Law Judge to rebut the charges brought in the complaint. The alleged charges may or may not be proven.

Of interest to poultry growers may be a case filed by GIPSA in April involving Park Poultry, Inc. based in Canton, Ohio. In this case, GIPSA charges that the company paid contract poultry growers between 10 and 18 days late for live poultry and failed to keep adequate records and use serially numbered scale tickets. GIPSA is requesting that Park Poultry file

Cont. on pg 3

2011 UPGA Annual Meeting Announced!

**Wednesday, October 26, 2011
12:00 PM**

2410 Westgate Blvd, Suite 101
Albany, GA 31707
Phone: 229-420-4863

Three Board member positions, growers Victor Nguyen, Joey Ammons, and Lawrence Shadix, have been nominated to be re-elected to an expiring 3-year term. Members may submit their nominations by delivering written notice to the address above.

'Commissioner Black' from page 1

Changes at the Dept. of Agriculture

I immediately saw the need to open the channels and let the staff do their jobs without having them come to me with every detail. I also started a strategic planning process to get feedback from the public and from stakeholders. We are looking at what has been suggested and discussed.

We are still working to get technology more integrated into the Department. We want license holders to be able to renew online, for instance. Farmers and agribusiness professionals are busy people. We want to make their jobs easier.

Everyone in the poultry industry has probably noticed that the Georgia Poultry Market News is now on the front page of our website in a prominent location. Keeping the industry abreast of market changes is one of our most important responsibilities. Having accurate and up-to-date information is essential to any business's decision-making process. Our website has pricing data going back 11 years and graphs that illustrate pricing for three years. This will help the media and the public understand the industry better.

Challenges Facing Poultry Industry

The high cost of feed is driving profit margins down. While the Department has no control over this, all of us in agriculture need to make sure our voices are heard at the national level, and certainly at the state level, when rules or laws are enacted that affect us. As a regulatory agency, the Georgia Department of Agriculture will make sure that the needs of all parties are considered when any rules or regulations are being considered.

We must work to open trade and end unfair trade limitations and embargoes. Our poultry is safe, a bargain, and we can provide a steady stream of it for anyone wishing to buy. Any country using an embargo or restriction is doing so for their own agenda. Embargoes and restrictions are not a reflection on the quality of Georgia poultry. One of the main attractions of the many KFCs and other American restaurants opening in China is that the Chinese recognize that food from these outlets - American food - is safe.

Our International Trade Office works to open markets around the world and puts buyers together with sellers. I have supported the deepening of the



Gary Black talks agriculture with reporters.

Savannah harbor to enhance our export capabilities.

Domestically, we must continue our education and marketing efforts. Poultry is a cost-efficient source of protein, is healthy and versatile and delicious. Nutritionists and the public have rediscovered the healthiness of eggs. We must continue to get those messages to the public. The Department has a new Nutritional Outreach Specialist that will be working to help us continue to get these messages out.

Sometimes our successes are our challenges. For example, an abundant supply of reasonably priced, safe food, no outbreaks of H1N1 or other diseases may make the public and legislators think the poultry industry never has needs or problems. They may forget the need for university research, a poultry lab or protective measures.

In Closing

The poultry industry is of vital importance to this state. My administration is always willing to listen to concerns from everyone. I invite you to visit the Department's website and Facebook page and to visit your Georgia Department of Agriculture and to let us know your concerns. ❖

Interested in the price of poultry today? Georgia Department of Agriculture Commissioner Gary Black encourages you to take advantage of their daily web post on poultry market news.



Point your browser to the following website:
<http://agr.georgia.gov/dockprices.aspx>

To get weighted daily prices and more information, please call (404) 656-3656 or email them at:
Peter.Pilewicz@agr.georgia.gov

IN THE NEWS

Will Recent Food Borne Illness Outbreaks Break Growers?

Growers have enough challenges on the farm, and many are wondering what the latest media frenzy involving salmonella contamination in ground turkey products could do to the market.

The USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service issued a Class I recall in August for Cargill Meat Solutions Corporation, based in Springdale, Arkansas. The Recall involves approximately 36 million pounds of ground turkey products that may be contaminated with a multi-drug resistant strain of Salmonella Heidelberg, according to FSIS. The agency notes that the products subject to recall bear the establishment number "P-963" inside the USDA mark of inspection. (Please see UPGA's web link for a complete listing of affected products as well as contact information and web links for USDA FSIS.)

Recent food illness scares for livestock and poultry products, peanuts, spinach, sprouts and

other US and foreign grown crops have farmers and consumers alike frustrated and scared for their health and their pocket-books. No one wants to throw out food products that they just bought and growers fear that consumers hit with such misfortune will shun their products, at least for a period of time, before feeling comfortable enough with food safety to enter the market again.

How these market interruptions translate into dinner table decisions and processor and grower bottom lines are anyone's guess, and cause for major concern among those making a living in the food business. UPGA encourages growers to redouble their efforts to make sure proper sanitary practices are followed in their operations. It's a responsibility all in the farm-to-fork process must put serious effort into to limit potential future food borne illness scares. ❖

Source: USDA Food Safety & Inspection Service

New Litmus Ammonia Monitor Announced

In late 2010, LITMUS FQI introduced their Litmus Ammonia Monitor (LAM) to the agricultural sector. With input from growers and the industry, the company's new LAM offers average ammonia levels in a time flexible format, and economical price. Capable of documenting daily ammonia levels, the company claims the product offers growers benefits such as larger, healthier birds, better feed conversions, healthier working environment, and fewer odors and emissions. LAM is now available as the Hog Slat/Georgia Poultry Ammonia Monitors (HAM) both in the US and in Europe. The company believes these products will become more important to growers as environmental/animal advocacy groups put additional pressure on regulatory bodies to monitor and restrict ammonia gas emissions. For more information contact Grayson Upchurch, LITMUS FQI, phone (770) 967-3000, email gupchurch@litmusgti.com, or web www.litmusfqi.com. ❖

'USDA Takes Enforcement Action' from page 1

an answer or admit all material allegations of the complaint and that an order be issued to require the company to cease and desist from violations found to exist, along with assessment of a civil penalty.

In an unrelated livestock case pursued by the agency, Eddie Bennett, dba Preferred Livestock, was assessed a civil penalty of \$20,000 in August. The default decision against the livestock business was based on charges that he failed to pay, when due, the full purchase price for livestock purchases; and failed to pay the full purchase price of livestock.

According to USDA, The Packers and Stockyards Act is a fair trade practice and payment protection law that promotes fair and competitive marketing environments for the livestock, meat, and poultry industries. ❖



Message from UPGA President Lucius Adkins

Despite the talk of debt ceilings and US solvency consuming our media and inundating us daily, the most pressing political issues of the day are not happening in Washington. In fact, the most treacherous and all-consuming political battle is actually happening in state capitols nationwide and under our beloved Gold Dome here in Georgia. It's not farm policy that's driving the debate, rather a little prospect called "redistricting" that's got their attention, and should have yours.

While some see this debate only being about individual political futures, growers should remember the impacts this process may have on their own. Politicians are grappling with what is probably rural Georgia's biggest nightmare, the reapportionment of political districts necessitated by the census and our Constitution's one man-one vote tenet. Growth has occurred in Georgia, but not evenly across our great state. In fact, some areas near my home in Southwest Georgia have actually lost population. The reality of dwindling rural populations in Georgia and nationally, has farmers, their associations and advocates consternating over what may happen to their political clout and representation. Growth and sprawl

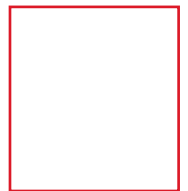
in metro centers may also pose new "nuisance" issues for agricultural interests as urban dwellers expand closer to rural Georgia's farm operations.

Will that encroachment, coupled with a greater proportion of urban clout in political representation spell new issues for Georgia's farmers? Might we expect more proposed laws dealing with farm nutrients and water quality standards? What about "that smell" some former city slickers may raise as their political districts change and engulf farm lands? On Georgia's agricultural policy front, metro growth around Atlanta and North Georgia will have the effect of diluting some South Georgia representation and likely depose some former strong farm advocates that have served for many years. The net result will likely be the loss of several longtime agriculture advocates in the state house. On the bright side, Georgia will actually increase in Congressional representation, with that growth in North Georgia likely sprouting a 14th District in the poultry prolific Gainesville area of Georgia. Regardless, the number of farm votes continues to erode. Let's ensure our voices continue to be heard by keeping UPGA a strong voice in educating the many new faces that will enter the Gold Dome as a result of this year's redistricting process.

Sincerely,
Lucius Adkins
President, United Poultry Growers Association



P.O. Box 70967
Albany, Georgia 31708



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