



Message from UPGA President Lucius Adkins

Well we are finishing up planting time as I write and finally we have an idea of what rules we'll be playing under as the showdown between Congress and the President concludes on the new Farm Bill. While nutrition, credit and other commodity issues are a big focus of the bill, UPGA spent the bulk of our time fighting for the inclusion of the new livestock title provisions. I was fortunate to have had the opportunity to be a part of a delegation of Georgia Farm Bureau members in meetings with our Congressional representatives just before the conference committee finalized its compromise. We were able to enlighten some folks on just how important the bill is to Georgia farmers and consumers, and we hope that our efforts made a difference now and in future negotiations. Unfortunately, President Bush never warmed up to the compromise bill and vetoed it. Congress was not deterred and took the rare step of overriding him, siding with farmers and consumers over ideology. We will

now have to see how the new law is implemented through the various agency regulations that will be promulgated.

Meanwhile, the Georgia General Assembly recently concluded and poultry growers were spared any harmful legislation largely due to our very capable chairs of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees, Rep. Tom McCall and Senator John Bulloch respectively.

I hope you'll take the time to brush up on the latest developments regarding litigation and poultry litter that are playing out in our court system in Oklahoma. It seems absurd that growers are faced with such assaults, but I'm afraid this may be just the tip of the iceberg. As our population urbanizes and gets farther and farther removed from the farm, these conflicts will only grow. That is why organizations like UPGA are so important in our future ability to farm. Your investments allow us to pool our resources and face government and other external threats with a unified voice and effective representation. I hope you'll stick with us as UPGA continues to work to advance your interests.

Sincerely,
Lucius Adkins
President, United Poultry Growers Association



P.O. Box 70967
Albany, Georgia 31708

PRSR STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit 41
Albany GA

Chicken Wire

FARM BILL Finally Produces for Poultry Growers

After years of effort by poultry growers, Congress finally agreed to move forward with reforms in laws governing how growers interact with corporate integrators. President Bush vetoed the legislation, but the House and Senate overwhelmingly voted to override the President's veto. Now lawmakers will have to take additional action to correct 34 missing pages of trade legislation inadvertently dropped from the vetoed version. Whatever the case, poultry growers now know the Livestock Title so desperately sought is finally law.

As currently passed, the \$307 billion Farm Bill will reform some key issues long sought by growers, by establishing a Livestock Title featuring:

Livestock, Poultry and Competition

Strengthens Producer Protections: The bill ensures producers are not forced into mandatory arbitration in livestock or poultry contracts. Producers will be allowed to decline arbitration prior to entering into the contract.

Increases Contracting Fairness: The bill enables a swine or poultry producer to litigate a contract dispute where the principal part of their production occurs, instead of where the company headquarters is located, which could be several states away from where the producer's farm is located.

Clarifies Country of Origin Labeling Requirements: The bill requires retailers to label the country of origin of meat (such as beef, lamb, pork, chicken and goat meat), fish, fruits, vegetables, ginseng, peanuts, pecans and macadamia nuts by September 30, 2008.

Improves Administrative Oversight: The bill improves oversight and transparency of USDA's enforcement of the Packers and Stockyards Act by requiring the Department of Agriculture to provide an annual compliance report detailing the number of investigations and length of time spent on potential violations of the Act. Investigations will be required to be tracked and documented throughout every step of the enforcement process starting with the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration, USDA Office of General Counsel and the Department of Justice. ❖



U. S. Senator Saxby Chambliss (R-Ga)

“ This is a tremendous victory for all Georgians from the producers who grow the food we eat, to those seeking assistance to feed their families. This farm bill strengthens our nation's food security, protects the livelihood of our producers and provides investments in nutrition, conservation and energy. ”



New Market Opportunities Emerge in Europe

The Transatlantic Economic Council recently met in Brussels and recommended that the eleven year old ban on imports of U.S. poultry be lifted. The new policy marks a huge boost for American growers, some predicting as much as a \$200 million economic impact.

The use of chlorine has not been allowed in food products in the European Union, as it is considered a carcinogen. A low concentration of the chemical has long been used by the domestic poultry industry to combat salmonella and other potential pathogens that can occur in slaughtered birds.

Continued on page 3

Go Online to **Get the Latest News** from **UPGA:** www.unitedpoultrygrowers.com

Poultry Litter at Forefront of "Alleged Public Health Crisis"

It may be hard to believe but chicken excrement is at the heart of the issue at stake in a legal drama that is playing out in an Oklahoma Courtroom. It seems that the Attorney General of the Sooner state is on a mission to "criminalize bacteria" as one attorney representing the poultry industry put it.

Oklahoma Attorney General Drew Edmondson is in federal court trying to make the case that chicken poop is threatening the public and the environment in the Illinois River watershed. The 576,000 acre watershed is home to about 1800 poultry houses, but the majority of those are actually across the state line in Arkansas. State environmental officials have teamed with the Attorney General testifying that "we need relief now to protect public health this summer."

According to a press release from Edmondson's office, "Poultry pollution is a problem in Oklahoma and in several states across the nation," Edmondson said, "especially Georgia, the Carolinas and the Delmarva Peninsula states of Delaware, Maryland and Virginia. My role was to update the chief legal officers of the states about Oklahoma's efforts to curb the environmental and public health problems the massive dumping of poultry waste has caused in the Illinois River Watershed."

Edmondson said his remarks were geared toward helping other states find solutions to their particular situations without going to court.



Georgia's poultry growers watch Oklahoma's court case where disposing of litter was blamed for potential environmental and public health issues.

"My hope is that Oklahoma's experience can serve as a guide for other states," Edmondson said. "While our efforts at negotiating a settlement failed, that does not mean negotiations could not be successful elsewhere."

The attorney general said the poultry pollution issue is of national importance, both to the environment and the poultry industry.

"We are in federal court alleging violations of state and federal laws, and we need a national solution," Edmondson said. "Should we prevail in court, the defendants in our lawsuit will be forced to play by a different set of rules than their competition. That national solution can come from Congress, or it can come one state at a time."

This situation could be facing Georgia growers in the future. The issue in Oklahoma is one where concentration of poultry production and land available to spread litter are in conflict with people. In Georgia this is also happening where North Georgia farms need to dispose of the litter, but row crop farms are not available in the area to spread the byproduct in an agronomic amount. In South Georgia, the opposite is true, where poultry litter is in high demand as a fertilizer and row crop farmers there will pay a premium for it.

North Georgia growers can sell their litter to South Georgia row croppers for \$25/ton to "get rid of it" while it's worth \$60/ton. Growers in South Georgia lose a valuable economic return because the market for their litter is depressed by the cheap litter.

The possibilities are numerous. Along the eastern Shore in Maryland, growers there are ready to enter their litter into the renewable fuels market. The State Senate there passed a bill that would classify chicken litter as a Tier 1 renewable energy source. The result is that chicken poop is on par with wind and solar power from an eco standpoint. Juxtapose that with the environmental threat Oklahoma officials want to classify it as. Go figure. ♦

Poultry Litter Transfer Incentives

In 2005, the Georgia NRCS office piloted a new incentive program to support the export of poultry litter from North Georgia watersheds to other parts of the state in an effort to help improve water quality. The Coosa and Chattahoochee River Basins in North Georgia have water quality problems associated with nutrient over-enrichment. Poultry litter is one of many sources of nutrients in these watersheds. Poultry litter transfer incentives can help to address water quality concerns and also develop greater demand for poultry litter as fertilizer in other parts of the state. Incentives for poultry litter transfer are an innovative approach to water quality protection that other states are using.

The NRCS pilot project is ending this year, but a new research and outreach project is being conducted to evaluate how to proceed with a longer-term poultry litter transfer program in the state. This project is being implemented by the University of Georgia and the Georgia Water Planning & Policy Center with support from the Georgia Soil & Water Conservation Commission and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. The purpose of this project is to build a foundation to support poultry litter transfer in Georgia. A primary focus of the project is the development of a partnership of stakeholders, government agencies, and nongovernmental organizations to support the program. To build this partnership, the project has formed a workgroup with members including poultry producers, poultry litter haulers, poultry litter processors, row crop farmers, extension agents, and agricultural and environmental agency officials.

The workgroup has met several times over the past six months. It has heard presentations from

experts on a wide range of topics including poultry litter transfer programs in other states, poultry disease management, litter processing, water quality, and poultry litter value. The workgroup has discussed in depth the benefits of and barriers to poultry litter transfer in Georgia. Over the next few months, the workgroup will help to develop recommendations on how Georgia should proceed with poultry litter transfer.

The second major focus of the project is to provide the research needed to support effective program design. The researchers are evaluating the results of the NRCS pilot program and conducting additional research as needed to support recommendations for improvement. An important focus of this research is the potential for linking water quality trading, a market-based incentive for water quality management, and poultry litter transfer.

Building public support for and participation in a litter transfer program will require reaching beyond the project workgroup. Therefore, the third major focus of the project is outreach to a broader audience - those who participate in, are affected by or have an interest in poultry litter transfer. The outreach component of the project is using educational materials and public meetings to inform interested citizens about the program.

This project will be complete in September 2008. Over the summer, the project will hold a public meeting to present recommendations and to foster additional discussion about poultry litter transfer in Georgia. If you are interested in more information about this project or the upcoming meeting, please contact: Kristin Rowles, 404-822-2395, krowles@h2opolicycenter.org, Georgia Water Planning & Policy Center.

'New Market' continued from page 1

UPGA president Lucius Adkins said this was a big win for Georgia growers, the number one poultry producers in the nation. "We are extremely pleased that our trade negotiators have convinced our friends in Europe that our sanitary protocols are extraordinarily safe and effective in delivering the highest quality birds," said Adkins.

While some believe the science has always supported the U.S. practice, it appears now that the political will has also risen to the requisite level to resolve the trade impasse. It is not known whether this concession by EU trading partners will enhance or retard other issues of dispute between the EU and U.S., such as the use of biofuels and patent protections. ♦

UPGA: The Facts

The members of UPGA are a diverse group of farmers banded together with a unified voice to work on common objectives. There is strength in numbers.

DID YOU KNOW:

- ♦ UPGA has members in 7 states, from Arkansas to Florida
- ♦ UPGA has members in 81 of Georgia's counties
- ♦ UPGA's members work with 19 integrators

Thank you for investing in the vision!