

Chicken Wire

Farm Bureau Seeks to Unite All Farmers

Poultry, a Specific Commodity Concern, with a Dedicated Committee

By Zippy Duvall, Guest Columnist



Zippy Duvall, President of Georgia Farm Bureau

The New Testament book of James teaches us that "a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." Without a unity of purpose, we are driven by the wind like waves of the sea. This biblical truth is evident in many arenas, but nowhere is it more pertinent than when we, as farmers, work with our elected officials.

The Georgia General Assembly has 236 members. The U.S. Congress has 535 members. Clearly, our founding fathers designed a system of government where legislation can only be passed by consensus and compromise. If farmers are to be successful in the legislative arena, we must speak with one voice. That is the purpose of Farm Bureau; to be "The Voice of Agriculture."

The necessity of speaking with one voice does not override the importance of various commodity groups and organizations. Commodity groups get to the point of an issue because they are specialists, and Farm

Bureau recognizes that fact. We work regularly with the different commodity commissions in Georgia and we are closely aligned with commodity organizations, such as the United Poultry Growers Association. Within our organization, we have established 20 commodity advisory committees to address specific producer concerns, including poultry, which is chaired by Phil Sanders from Oglethorpe County. I myself grow poultry on my farm and am sensitive to the needs of poultry producers. And I believe all commodities should have strong representation in our organization.

Our interdependence is obvious when you look around at meetings of the various farm organizations. Whether it's a Farm Bureau meeting or a meeting of poultry growers, cattlemen, or row crop farmers, our members are the same people. *Continued on back page*

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USDA Announces **NEW** Farm Bill Tool

'Side-by-Side' Provides Comparison of New and Old Law

In response to strong demand for the information product after passage of the 2008 Farm Bill, USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) has announced the launch of a new, web based side-by-side comparison tool for examining the new farm law. ERS touts that the new posting is "summarized but substantive". The agency reports that the new side-by-side will afford users a time-saving reference and will include details by Title. Poultry growers will no doubt be interested in the Livestock Title, which includes groundbreaking changes in the laws governing production contracts. This publication, along with other related ERS publications and analyses can be linked to from www.unitedpoultrygrowers.com.

ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

Wednesday, October 22, 2008

12:00 PM

2410 Westgate Blvd, Suite 101

Albany, GA 31707

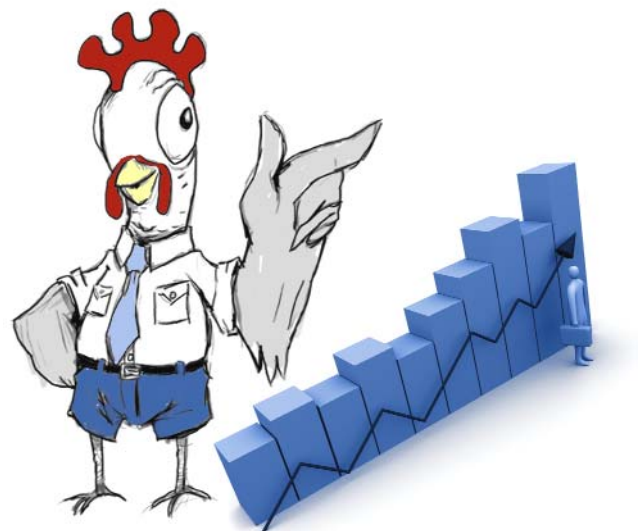
Phone: 229-420-4863

Two board member positions will be elected by director's ballot at the annual meeting. Growers Victor Nguyen and Joey Ammons have been nominated to fill two expiring 3-year terms.

AGRICULTURAL BANKING: 101

Are Growers Using the Best Banking Strategies in Today's Financial Market?

Recently UPGA spent some time discussing agricultural finance trends with Angela Hammond, Vice President with Regions Bank in Calhoun, Georgia. Hammond represents an institution that has grown into the sixth largest lender in the U.S. agricultural banking market. She explained that Region's has developed a wealth of expertise in agricultural issues and works to fulfill the special needs farmer's face when it comes to financial solutions.



UPGA: "So what would you say sets Region's apart from other financial institutions when it comes to agricultural banking?"

Hammond: "We at Regions recognize that farming, especially poultry production, has changed dramatically over the last 20 years. We strive to tailor solutions to a grower's unique situation. That means a grower seeking our expertise will get a dedicated Relationship Manager - that's one person, dedicated to that grower for his or her lending needs. For this reason, more than 6,500 farmers now come to Regions for their banking."

UPGA: "What kind of solutions does Regions offer that growers may not find at other institutions?"

Hammond: "We deliver tailored solutions, to the grower's specific situation. However, in general, we provide operating lines of credit for livestock, crops and feed; longer term financing for facilities and real estate; equipment financing for vehicles and farm equipment; and personal banking services for the farm family and employees."

UPGA: "Are there specific Regions' products that may be of interest to poultry growers?"

Hammond: "When looking at the more than 120 Regions clients devoted to poultry specifically, well over half rely on Regions to handle their cash and deposits. On that front, we offer everything from checking and on-line banking, to cash management and payroll services. Regarding loans and lines of credit which are almost equally popular, Regions has more capabilities than most banks when it comes to flexible payments that correspond to the sale period of poultry."

UPGA: "What is the best way for growers to determine if their current farm banking strategy is good for their bottom line?"

Hammond: "We like to think that every financial service we provide goes directly to the bottom line. In fact, we try to track the overall profits of our clients and know that ag clients of Regions produce more than \$6.6 billion annually. So if your banker knows little about your revenue, major concerns and goals for profit growth, come to see us at Regions."

For more information please contact Angela Hammond, Vice President Business Banker at telephone (706) 629-7096 , fax (706) 625-5838 or at angela.hammond@regions.com.

Poultry Production Helps Boost Georgia's Economy

Agricultural production remains a key driver in Georgia's economy according to a report released by the University of Georgia's Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development. Georgia agriculture creates 708,174 jobs and \$92 billion in sales, representing a whopping 13 percent of the State's total economic output. In addition, the food and fiber sector, which includes agriculture, forestry products and food services, represents 14 percent of Georgia's employed workforce. The report attributes the largest increase in economic output to broiler production, which increased 24 percent from 2006 to 2007 to \$926 million. Unchanged were Georgia's top ten commodity rankings, which continues the dominance of the broiler sector, attributed with 41 percent of total farm gate values. To see the full report go to: <http://www.caed.uga.edu/publications/2008/pdf/CR-08-07.pdf>

UPGA President Encourages Growers to Comment

UPGA is among a number of agricultural organizations supporting changes to USDA's proposed rules to enforce Country of Origin Labeling (COOL). This law simply ensures consumers have the opportunity to know the origin of the food they are buying. This law was first passed with the 2002 Farm Bill and reauthorized again with the passage of the 2008 Farm Bill earlier this year. Chicken is among the many commodities covered by this law. September 30, 2008 is the deadline for comments and also the effective date for implementation. The problem with the current USDA proposal is that it exempts many of the foods consumers buy, because it only applies to foods that are not processed. Obviously, many food items found in the grocery store have been cooked, marinated or cured, making them exempt from the labeling requirement. In addition, the rule doesn't apply to foods that have been combined with other covered commodities. UPGA encourages growers to make their voices heard on this important law by submitting their comments to USDA at:

Website: <http://www.regulations.gov/search/index.jsp>
(Check the box: "Select to find documents accepting comments or submissions" and search for "country of origin labeling")

Fax: (202) 354-4693

Mail: Country of Origin Labeling Program
Room 2607-S, Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA
Stop 024, 1400 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20250-0254

Happy Birthday UPGA

Celebrating 10 years of service to poultry growers!

- ❖ *Economic issues - contract negotiations, natural gas price stabilization, litter disposal*
- ❖ *Legal issues - contract dispute resolution*
- ❖ *Legislative issues - worked alongside lawmakers for contract agriculture reform*

Our mission is to improve the economic and social well-being of contract poultry growers and their families. UPGA serves as an independent voice to advance the interests of growers throughout the southeast. Let's work together to see even greater progress in the next 10 years.



UPGA President, Lucius Adkins (right), shown here with Governor Sonny Perdue (center) and Senator John Bulloch after signing HB648 in 2004. This UPGA backed legislation established new legal provisions for poultry contracts.

A Look Back...

Almost ten years ago, back in 1999, UPGA President Lucius Adkins wrote in the newsletter:

What's Happening?

Good News - A recent University of Georgia study shows that poultry houses are profitable 72% of the time.

Bad News - The same study concludes that profit is only a 1.52% return on assets.

Georgia - I have always believed that eventually "right will prevail". We will reach a point where the strength derived from growers joining and working together will outweigh the money and influence of the poultry companies. Remember, we are not working against anyone, we are working for poultry growers.

(Adkins in 1999 referring to ongoing struggles to change poultry contract laws — Adkins words were not fortuitous, as ten years later, both state and federal laws governing poultry contracts have been reformed, largely due to the ongoing efforts of UPGA.)

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Farm Bureau strives to complement Georgia's commodity groups. Our purpose is to be the place where we can come together as farmers to reach consensus on the broad issues that affect all of us. We work to show a unified front at the local, state, and national level in order that all farmers may benefit.

Our elected representatives need farmers to be unified when legislation is discussed. Experience has shown that if we come together and agree on a particular course of action, our representatives are willing to assist us. On the other hand, if we can't reach agreement among ourselves as farmers, how can we expect legislators to find consensus?

Farm Bureau needs your participation to be successful. Our legislative positions are determined by our official policy which is derived from resolutions submitted by county Farm Bureau chapters. We hold extensive meetings to debate the policy until it is finally ratified at our state convention in December. The same procedure is repeated at the national level to determine the policy of the American Farm Bureau.

Once our policy is determined, we seek its implementation through legislative, regulatory, and other means. We work to build relationships between county Farm Bureaus and

legislators in a truly grassroots fashion. The most effective lobbying is done when local constituents speak to their own legislators.

Farmers are being pressured on many fronts, and in some cases, there are outright attacks on American agriculture. We must use all assets at our disposal to make sure our concerns are addressed in a positive way. Only by joining together with one voice can we be effective.

As the President of Georgia Farm Bureau, I pledge to use our organization's resources to assist in providing Georgia's farm families a fair and equitable standard of living and to ensure the existence of agriculture as a vital and thriving industry in the future. That is our purpose.

To further that purpose, we are open to other farm and commodity groups, and we invite you to join us as well. In this time of rising farm input costs and other uncertainties, we need to seek solutions in a unified way. Poultry growers must be a part of this process.

Zippy Duvall was elected president of Georgia Farm Bureau in December 2006. A third generation Greene County dairyman, Zippy retired from the dairy business in 2005. He and his wife of 27 years, Bonnie, now operate a 150 brood cow beef operation, produce and sell quality hay, and are poultry producers.



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