

Emu Raisers Flock To Las Vegas

DALLAS, Texas — Ambassador Clayton Yeutter, secretary of agriculture in the Bush Administration, will discuss global meat production and consumer demands when he addresses about 2,500 attendees at the American Emu Assn. (AEA) Convention and Exposition at Bally's Las Vegas, July 6-8.

At the opposite end of the speakers' spectrum is Clint Malarchuk, former American Hockey League "Goaltender of the Year," who had a stellar career in the National Hockey League before finding "peace, happiness and a future on a Las Vegas emu ranch."

Also expected to attend are World Champion Bareback Rider Wayne Herman from the pro rodeo circuit and Dallas Maverick Jason Kidd, "NBA Rookie of the Year," both of whom use emu oil to relieve aches, pains and strains.

"Emu raising is one of the fastest growing, most dynamic agribusinesses in the nation, with a remarkable interest being shown internationally," said Bettye L. Odle, president of the 6,000-member, Dallas-based, non-profit trade organization.

"In less than six years, this onced-fledgling industry has grown to more than 10,000 families raising an estimated 1.2 million to 1.5 million emus in 48 states," said Odle of Flower Mound, Texas. (Figures based on AEA 1994 National Census and Growth Study.)

"The AEA has 33 state chapters. There is an increasing number of

national and regional cooperatives and numerous research studies are building a scientific knowledge base on emus and their products — meat, oil, leather and feathers."

Emus, classified as "livestock" or "ratites" (flightless birds) in most states, are moving into pastures and pens as ranchers, farmers, suburbanites, retirees and even "backyard breeders" see the environmentally-sensitive birds as a way to revitalize ag operations, particularly small acreage, Odle emphasized.

Emu processing and oil rendering plants have begun operating in Texas, with other commercial processing operations in various stages of start-up in Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Louisiana and Mississippi. Texas accounts for about 30 percent of the U.S. emu raisers and a similar portion of the American emu population.

Nutrition in the commercial era will be addressed by Dr. Larry Roth, Minnesota; Dr. Dennis Sigler, Texas; and Dr. Sheila Scheideler of Nebraska. Total management for the breeder in the commercial market will be addressed by Dr. Rosalina Angel of Missouri.

Genetic enhancement will be discussed by Dr. Mark Rosenfeld of Utah, and hatchability will be the focus of Dr. Francine Bradley, an embryonic pathologist from the University of California. Dr. Wayne Purcell of the Research Institute

on Livestock Pricing, will share major marketing case studies for poultry and red meat.

California emu producer Roger Haley will share some startling results from intensive genetic, nutritional and pathological research over a three-year period.

Meanwhile, the exhibit area will feature everything from cooperatives, incubators, ranches, jewelry and artwork, to ratite publications, software, fencing, feeds and fashions — including leather swim wear, jackets and full-length western duster.

Dr. Yeutter, who will keynote the 5th annual meeting on Friday, July 7, recently chaired a session on "Regional Accords and a New World Order" at the World Meat Congress in Denver, the premier international event for the world's meat and livestock industries. In addition to undergraduate and law degrees, Yeutter also earned a Ph.D. in agricultural economics from the University of Nebraska.

He was instrumental in steering the 1990 Farm Bill through Congress, moving U.S. agriculture towards a more market-oriented policy structure. He also served as a U.S. Trade Representative and helped the 1988 Trade Bill through Congress while launching the 100-nation Uruguay round of GATT negotiations which led to the historic U.S.-Canada free trade agreement.

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