

# China's Bout With A.I. Still Concerns Worldwide Poultry Industry

ANDY ANDREWS

Lancaster Farming Staff  
MANHEIM (Lancaster Co.) — About 900 million people live on "farms" in China, a country that holds 20 percent of the world's population.

China is the world's leading pork producer at five times the size of the U.S. and number two in world production of meat poultry, according to Dr. David Kradel, poultry health consultant and coordinator of the state's renowned egg quality assurance program.

With a huge population that relies heavily on open markets to sell live birds and is slow in developing western-style methodologies to handle diseases, this could spell concerns for the poultry industry worldwide.

Kradel spoke to more than two dozen industry representatives Monday at the Poultry Management and Health Seminar at Kreider's Restaurant in Manheim.

In September, Kradel traveled to China along with two nutritionists and a manufacturing representative under the auspices of the American Soybean Association (ASA). The group toured China's several large poultry-producing regions, including laboratories and processing plants.

Kradel said that he was surprised to see that China, in terms of total land area, is actually smaller than the U.S. Only 10 percent of the land is tillable, home to about 1.3 billion people, five times the population of the U.S.

About 70 percent of the total population lives in rural areas and are classified "farmers." Of the 1.3 billion people, "I'm sure there's that many bicycles, too," Kradel said, since the cities are congested

and bicycles provide the primary means of transportation.

ASA sees the value in such a venture and maintains an active presence in China. Grain companies export soybeans (four million tons) and soybean oil meal (about two million tons) annually into China. Ninety percent of the soybeans they feed to poultry comes from the U.S.; only about 10 percent of the oil meal comes from the U.S. (India's prices undercut U.S.).

Kradel and the ASA-sponsored group took part in two-day seminars in five different locations: Beijing, Shanyann, Shanghai, Guandong (which exports chickens to the nearby Hong Kong market, and Hong Kong. When it was over, Kradel learned about some of the progress the industry has made and how it has tackled some of the issues, including the worldwide industry concerns about avian influenza (A.I.)

"I really enjoyed the experience and the trip," he said. "I was glad to come back home, though, as almost anyone is."

China, he said, is moving in the direction of "trying to be more open" yet is only slowly accepting western-style industry technology and health management protocols. The farm and business infrastructure is "very complex," he said, and the politics are intrinsic in almost all aspects of the industry.

However, many western companies, including those from the U.S., are actively involved in joint ventures with the growers in some parts of the country.

China is number one in the production of eggs, tripled in the past few years over the U.S.

There are three types of farms in

the country: the household or backyard farms, with one to four sows and a small flock of chickens; a specialized household farm with 1,000-2,000 broilers at five cycles per year; and modern poultry production units, in a government venture (at least 40-50 of them in operation, Kradel noted).

Of the large ventures, several companies hold a good bit of the 48 percent market share, with Arbor Acres on top at 32 percent, Hubbard at 8 percent, and others.

In the country, 700 farms manage typical populations of 1,500-10,000 broilers per farm in growouts under contract. The flocks are raised along with mink — dead chickens are a source of mink feed.

China is making little use of imported western-style technology, especially in the area of poultry health. On a tour of the Shanghai region, Kradel discovered at one lab site, "they were doing very, very little." He looked into an incubator and saw there was "not one plate in there," he said, compared to the stacks of plates found in a typical U.S. poultry health lab.

What is the Chinese government's "official" position on A.I.?

"They don't have it," Kradel said. But several A.I. serotypes have turned up from chicken out of the Guandong region, so "they undoubtedly do have it," Kradel said.

The biggest concerns: the presence of the H5N1 A.I. virus, the first reported virus that actually spread from birds to humans.

In 1997, of 18 cases of human infestation of the poultry virus, six people died. It's uncertain how those people became infected — other than they handled birds in the live markets on a consistent basis. Family members, friends, and co-workers who had contact with those exposed didn't come down with the disease.

Exactly how the virus spread from poultry to humans is still

under investigation. However, Kradel noted that research in Wisconsin shows that swine can pick up the disease from poultry and transmit it to humans. And there are a lot of hogs in China.

Hogs are the only species "that can take avian influenza from poultry and reassert it... as a type pathological to avians and humans," said Kradel.

In Honk Kong, 1.7 million birds were depopulated in the live bird markets. The cleanup and disinfection was successful. Now, trucks are stopped and blood samples of birds are taken on a mandatory

basis.

But according to Hong Kong experts, the H5N1 virus taken out of the country is the "most pathological A.I. ever seen," with 100 percent mortality to birds in a 24-hour time period. This is a "very significant problem" for disease in poultry and the human population, said Kradel.

Kradel provided an overview of the virus, symptoms of disease, and the risk the live bird markets in the U.S. still pose to the industry, with a hundred of them in New York and New Jersey areas alone.

"We have to do what we can to make sure it doesn't come back into commercial flocks," Kradel said. "We have to keep working with the USDA and so forth," noted Kradel, to learn more about how to control the virus. There is a need to be "as biosecure as we possibly can," he said.

## Manheim Posts Show Results

### DAIRY SHOW

JUNIOR SHOWMANSHIP: Crystal Brubaker, Blake Brubaker.

SENIOR SHOWMANSHIP: Heather Brubaker, James Findley.

JUNIOR FITTING: Blake Brubaker, Crystal Brubaker

SENIOR FITTING: Heather Brubaker, James Findley.

### AYRSHIRES

FFA/4-H JUNIOR HEIFER CALF: James Findley.

SENIOR HEIFER CALF: James Findley.

SUMMER YEARLING: James Findley.

SENIOR YEARLING HEIFER: James Findley.

JUNIOR 2-YEAR-OLD COW: 1. and 2. James Findley. 3. Ken Findley.

FFA/4-H JUNIOR 2-YEAR-OLD COW: 1. and 2. James Findley.

4-YEAR-OLD COW: James Findley.

FFA/4-H 4-YEAR-OLD COW: James Findley.

6-YEAR-OLD COW & OLDER: James Findley.

FFA/4-H 6-YEAR-OLD COW & OLDER: James Findley.

DRY COW: James Findley.

FFA/4-H DRY COW: James Findley.

DAM & DAUGHTER: James Findley.

FFA/4-H DAM & DAUGHTER: James Findley.

BEST THREE FEMALES: James Findley.

FFA/4-H BEST THREE FEMALES: James Findley.

DAIRY HERD: James Findley.

FFA/4-H DAIRY HERD: James Findley.

BEST UDDER: James Findley.

MILKING SHORTHORNS

JUNIOR HEIFER CALF: James Findley.

FFA/4-H JUNIOR HEIFER CALF: James Findley.

SENIOR 2-YEAR-OLD COW: James Findley.

FFA/4-H SENIOR 2-YEAR-OLD: James Findley.

DAM & DAUGHTER: James Findley.

### HOLSTEINS

JUNIOR YEARLING HEIFER: Blake Brubaker.

FFA/4-H JUNIOR YEARLING HEIFER: Blake Brubaker.

JUNIOR 2-YEAR-OLD COW: Heather Brubaker.

FFA/4-H JUNIOR 2-YEAR-OLD COW: Heather Brubaker.

SENIOR 2-YEAR-OLD COW: Crystal Brubaker.

FFA/4-H SENIOR 2-YEAR-OLD COW: Crystal Brubaker.

3-YEAR-OLD COW: Crystal Brubaker.

FFA/4-H 3-YEAR-OLD COW: Crystal Brubaker.

4-YEAR-OLD COW: Heather Brubaker.

FFA/4-H 4-YEAR-OLD COW: Heather Brubaker.

5-YEAR-OLD COW: Heather Brubaker.

FFA/4-H 5-YEAR-OLD COW: Heather Brubaker.

DRY COW: New Directions Holsteins.

FFA/4-H DRY COW: New Directions Holsteins.

SENIOR GET OF SIRE: New Directions Holsteins.

BEST THREE FEMALES: Heather Brubaker.

DAIRY HERD: Heather Brubaker.

BEST UDDER: Heather Brubaker.

### BEEF CATTLE

FFA

MEDIUM WEIGHT: 1. Fines Martin. 2. Jeremy Kready. 3. Rodney Garber.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: 1. Amy Bollinger.

2. Jordan Wolgemuth. 3. Ryan Garber.

HEAVYWEIGHT: 1. Ryan Zimmerman. 2. Derick Bollinger. 3. Tracy Zimmerman.

4-H

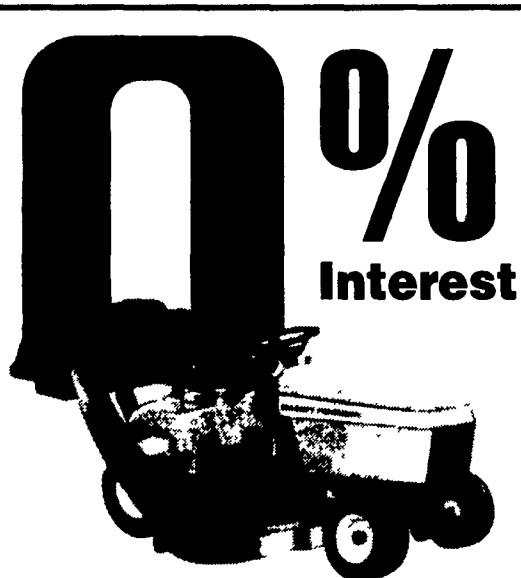
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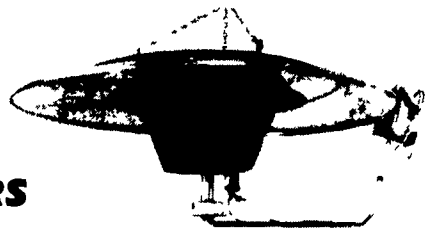
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