

# Poultry The Priority At Recent Seminar In Lancaster

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Lancaster Farming Staff

**LANCASTER** (Lancaster Co.) — Quality and growout issues were the topic of conversation at Lancaster County's recent Poultry Progress Day, conducted at the Lancaster Farm and Home Center.

The seminar drew 125 producers and industry representatives.

Susan Ranck and Bryan Woods, Farmer's Pride, discussed farm-to-processor quality assurance and quality control measures.

Hatcheries have an impact on bird quality if chicks react to their vaccination, which can be prevented if the vaccination is administered properly.

Infections acquired in the hatchery, along with retained yolk sacs (caused if the hatchers are too warm) cause trim loss or condemnations, according to Woods.

Growers can have an impact on how the production line runs if they raise birds that are "flighty," which in the end causes unnecessary trim and carcass downgrades.

"You don't want to domesti-

cate them, but we can see the difference of birds used to having people around," said Ranck.

Flighty birds tend to have poor skin quality from wounds received from the rest of the flock during a flight away from a person. "It's important that we keep the feathering up and the skin quality as good as we can," said Ranck.

They also address airsacculitis — internal infection of the bird through the respiratory tract. Stress on the farm means that the birds are more prone to bacterial infection, said Ranck. "This is probably one of the largest areas of frustration between growers and processors. We understand that it's not 100 percent avoidable."

"There is no such thing as a perfect broiler house. What we're looking for is to minimize the peaks and valleys," said Woods.

Poor litter conditions cause potential skin problem and increase bacterial load, they pointed out.

Feed withdrawal was also addressed.

"The ideal is to get the birds off feed when they're required to do so," according to Woods. If

the chickens are engorged and ruptured in processing, the line is slowed for cleanup.

"This is the prime focus of government control," said Woods.

To summarize, "we want to try to establish a good line of communication between the plant and the growers," he said.

Dr. Bud Malone, University of Delaware Extension, addressed trees as vegetative filters for poultry farms.

The public "smells with their eyes" he said, pointing out that poultry producers can rely on the "out of sight, out of mind" adage.

In addition, "it's amazing, the ability of trees to capture dust," he said, noting that studies have shown that filtering exhaust air can reduce odors up to 65 percent.

As far as production benefits, trees lower both heating and cooling cost, reduce snow drift, and decrease airborne farm-to-farm or house-to-house disease transmission.

Penn State Poultry Scientists are looking for poultry meat producers (contractors) to volunteer for this project demo.

Producers can contact either Mike Hulet at (814) 863-8934 or Gregory Martin at (717) 394-6851.

More information about the program is available at [www.rec.udel.edu/TopLevel/Publicat.htm](http://www.rec.udel.edu/TopLevel/Publicat.htm).

Dr. Gregory Martin, Penn State capital region poultry

agent, spoke about neighbor relations for poultry farmers.

Producers work in tight margins, care about animals, are trying to do the right thing, and grow quality products, he noted.

In addition, townships and legal bodies are concerned about upholding laws and welfare and use ordinances. "They do value ag" said Martin, since it is a business not needing the support of infrastructure yet helping economically and environ-

mentally.

For the third player, neighbors, "family health and welfare come first," he said. "They feel they have paid for the right to live where they like."

However "for the most part, people understand what we're doing and they support it," he said.

"Think before you act," he said to the producers in the audience. "A little compassion goes a long way," he said, noting that if farmers have a plow and plow out a neighbor's driveway, "they'll think you're the best thing since sliced bread."

He encouraged them to "talk about your industry," "be positive," and "follow up" on contact with neighbors.

"If you stay positive, never get flustered, and give the facts, you will portray a positive attitude," said Martin.

"Think about your management practices. They're generally fairly inexpensive to do, they do take some diligence, but will pay off in the end."

Martin also offered the help of the fly-control SWAT team that works on issues of fly management, odor, and dust control.

The group is a joint team of members from Penn State University, PennAg Industries Poultry Council, and representatives from the industry. Producers, townships, and residents who would like to contact the team may do so by calling (717) 394-6851.

Ray Leiby, Wenger's Feed

Mill, Inc., addressed feed bin management — "an important but sometimes overlooked area of management," he said.

Taking care of the feed bin maintains pellet quality and maintains structure quality.

In addition, managing a feed bin decreases risk of contaminants, insects, moisture, mold, toxins, and odors. It ensures the proper applications of medicines and keeps feeds of different nutrient value (starter versus grower) separate. Bin management means that there will be less of a buildup of old feed, which decreases storage capacity.

"Keep bins dry," he said, advising producers to repair bin leaks and make sure that bin lids have a proper seal.

"Rotate the feed in bins," said Leiby, and wherever possible, allow bins to stand empty and air out.

Remove caked, moldy buildup, and wash and air dry at least twice a year and document all cleaning.

Keep only one type of feed in a bin at a time, he said. In addition, replace worn tube augers, which leads to better pellet quality.

Patty Dunn, Penn Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, University Park, updated the audience about California's outbreak of Exotic Newcastle Disease (END).

On outbreak of END means "dire disease ramifications, regulatory consequences, and eco-

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