

April Meeting

The members discussed changes to the South Florida Fair Premium Book. The only change was to add a new contest for the **Best Decorated Floor Pen**. The floor pens must be maintenance free for duration of the fair. Trophies for both Open and Youth will be sponsored by the Van Heusen family.

Linda Wright and Wakita Schwartz told us about the presentation that they gave at St Clare's Catholic School about eggs and nutrition. They were well received at the school and many children learned a great deal about poultry and eggs.

Peter Brynes prepared a feast for us at the last meeting. This had to be the biggest dinner second only to our annual picnic and Christmas party. Peter brought in so much delicious food that we had to use two long tables to hold it all. As it turns out, Peter is a Master Chef and has owned many restaurants featuring his cooking expertise. This was a very special treat for the club and we certainly hope Peter will be willing to do this again some time.

Speaking of the Annual club picnic, the club decided tentatively that the picnic this year will be held on Saturday, June 21, 1997 at 1:00 pm in Dreher Park. We will confirm this date and time at the next meeting. Start thinking about what side dishes you will be bringing. The club will be furnishing all the meat, soft drinks, paper goods, utensils, cups, ice, and condiments. A sign up sheet will be at the next club meeting. Members may bring games for the kids and adults.



Chickens Flying at Mach II

- from *Feathers*, a California Poultry publication

The US Federal Aviation Administration has a unique device for testing the strength of windshields on airplanes. The device is a gun that launches a dead chicken at a plane's windshield at approximately the speed the plane flies.

The theory is that if the windshield doesn't crack from the carcass impact, it'll survive a real collision with a bird during flight.

It seems the British were very interested in this and wanted to test a windshield on a brand new, speedy locomotive they're developing. They borrowed FAA's chicken launcher, loaded the chicken and fired.

The supersonic chicken shattered the windshield, broke the engineer's chair and embedded itself in the back wall of the engine's cab. The British were stunned and asked the FAA to recheck the test to see if everything was done correctly.

The FAA reviewed the test thoroughly and had one recommendation: Next time use a thawed chicken.

Encephalitis and Cholera

Encephalitis may be caused by many different things. Encephalitis means inflammation of the brain. Avian encephalitis affects young chickens, and will cause disease only up to 6 to 7 weeks of age, not after that. The encephalitis transmitted by mosquitoes is equine encephalitis, and you don't have to worry about it unless it has been diagnosed in horses in the area. Bacterial encephalitis, such as caused by fowl cholera, are more likely to affect adult chickens.

Fowl cholera is completely unrelated to human cholera. Its form of presentation varies from sudden death with no previous signs (acute form), to inflammation of the wattles and tissue of the head, twisted neck, inflammation of the joints (chronic form). It may be transmitted through the water, when susceptible birds drink water that was contaminated by a diseased bird or a healthy carrier (another chicken, free flying birds, cats, mice, and others). Since the bacteria that causes it is often harbored in the nares, water is the most common source.

Avian Genetic Resources Task Force

by Jacqueline M. Pisenti,
Genetic Resources Conservation Program

The continuing loss of poultry genetic stocks is a very real concern today, affecting both genetic diversity (with the extinction of rare breeds and varieties) and the availability of such resources for studies in the sciences. While the issue of at-risk breeds are being addressed by breed organizations, stocks of interest for scientific purposes (mutations affecting development or metabolism, as well as selected and inbred lines) depend upon increasingly uncertain research funding for their continued existence. In fact, many of these stocks are facing extinction as their curating researchers either retire or lose funding for stock maintenance. These at-risk poultry stocks are, or could still be, of significant scientific value to the research community. To address the conservation issues for these stocks, the University of California Genetic Resources Conservation Program, in collaboration with the USDA (ARS and CSREES), has convened an Avian Genetic Resources Task Force. The task force, co-chaired by Mary Delany (University of California, Davis) and Robert Taylor (University of New Hampshire), includes representatives from academia, industry, and government.

The goals of this task force are 1) to compile an up-to-date listing of extant poultry genetic stocks, and 2) to produce a comprehensive and authoritative docu-

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Fire Ants

Many of you need no description when it comes to fire ants. They are nasty ants that build up large mounds in your yard. If you accidentally step on one, you can expect many stings that last for weeks. Notice that I used the word “sting” and not “bite”. This is because a fire ant has a stinger just like a wasp. It is this stinger that is responsible for the pain and pustules that follow. Most regular ants simply bite.

Fire ants have spread to the entire Southeastern United States. There are actually several different species of fire ants. The tropical fire ant, *Solenopsis geminata Fabricius*, and the southern fire ant, *Solenopsis xyloni McCook*, are native American species. These generally do not cause that big of a problem. However, there are two imported species of fire ants that are of much greater concern. These were brought into this country from South America at the port of Mobile, Alabama. The black imported fire ant, *Solenopsis richteri Forel*, arrived sometime around 1918 and the red imported fire ant, *Solenopsis invicta Buren*, in the late 1930's. Both species probably came to the port in soil used as ballast in cargo ships. Although the black imported fire ant is also a problem, the red imported fire ant is by far the worst and the fastest spreading. Today, the red imported fire ant has spread throughout the Southeastern United States and more than likely the kind that you are familiar with. In fact, the red imported fire ants are so aggressive that they have actually displaced the black imported fire ants. Currently, the black imported fire ant is only found in the extreme northeast Mississippi, northwest Alabama and a few southern counties in Tennessee.

Imported fire ants spread naturally through mating flights and by rafting during floods. However, it is through the actions of man that the dramatic spread of imported fire ants has occurred. During the housing boom of the 1950's, the imported fire ant began its march across the South. The spread of these ants was largely due to the movement of grass sod and landscaping materials.

In agriculture, fire ants have been identified as damaging fifty-seven species of cultivated plants including the germinating seeds of corn, sorghum, and soybeans. They have also been known to attack and kill small chickens that start scratching on top of their mounds. Wild birds have learned to stay clear of fire ant infested fields.

Fire ants are most notorious for their stinging behavior. A single fire ant can sting repeatedly and will continue to do so even after its venom sac has been depleted. Initially, the sting(s) result in a localized intense burning sensation (hence the name “fire” ant). This is followed within 24 - 48 hours by the formation of a white pustule at the sting site. This pustule is formed



only in response to the stinging of the two imported species. No pustule forms from the stings of native species. These pustules can become sites of secondary infection if not kept clean and can leave permanent scarring. Some people are allergic to fire ant venom and can react quite strongly; suffering chest pains, nausea, dizziness, shock or, in rare cases, lapsing into coma. Some deaths have been documented as having been caused by fire ant stings but these cases are extremely rare.

There are many commercially made fire ant pesticides. These include Amdro, and Diazinon and Dursban based pesticides. When dealing with pesticides, it is important for the poultry producer to remember that **chickens are not mammals**. This may sound silly, but what is harmless to us (mammals) may be lethal to chickens and vice versa. For example, Diazinon and Dursban are both highly toxic to poultry, but are only slightly toxic to humans. In fact, chickens tolerate Diazinon about as well as we tolerate cyanide. The Diazinon granules that most fire ant killers incorporate are by far the worst to use around chickens. These granules are made from coarsely ground corn impregnated with concentrated Diazinon. Chickens love to eat them when they find them laying out on top of a fire ant mound. If that happens, you can expect some dead chickens within a couple of hours. Therefore, it is best not to use Diazinon or Dursban granules if you raise chickens. This leaves us with Amdro which is probably the only fire ant killer that is safe to use around chickens. It works extremely well for controlling fire ants and yet is virtually harmless to chickens, however, if your chickens eat all the bait, then the fire ants will continue to thrive.

Another effective method of controlling fire ants without harming chickens is to use ordinary gasoline. I'm sure that this will make a lot of environmentalists cringe, but what works - works. It seems that fire ants are extremely sensitive to gasoline. Only a small amount or just strong fumes is enough to kill them. A typical fire ant mound can be wiped out completely and instantly by pouring about a quart of gasoline over it. The mound soaks up the gasoline like a sponge and the gasoline travels throughout the many subterranean tunnels. You should not ignite the gasoline as it is unnecessary and dangerous to do so. The obvious down side to this method of fire ant control is the brown patches of dead grass that are left behind. If you have a well for drinking water, it is a good idea not to pour out any gasoline within 100 feet of it.

The war against fire ants seems to be a never ending battle. The trick is not to ever give up and to keep after them.



Culling Non-Layers

by Gregg J. Cutler, DVM, MPVM, ACPV

My experience is that culling pays even at lower feed prices. It is an excellent management practice. The people need to be well trained as to what is a good producer and what is a cull. A competent poultryman can do this easily with even unskilled personnel.

The cost of the manpower to remove the culls is very small compared to the amount of feed that is consumed over the life of a non or low producing bird. A skilled culler can easily remove 30 birds per hour. Assuming a rate of pay of \$8.00 per hour and feed price of \$0.09 and a daily consumption of 100g the pay back period is about two weeks. Most businesses would like pay back periods like this on investments.

Color of the beak and legs, and width of the pubic bones, are more general indicators of whether a hen is laying or not. This is because a hen that is not laying for ANY reason should have more yellow pigment (because it is not depositing the pigment into the yolk) and narrower distance between pubic bones (because there are no follicles producing estrogen).

Not all breeds and strains of poultry will show changes to the same degree when they go out of production. These changes may also vary with diet, management, etc. It is best to be observant with your own birds on your own farm. If possible, monitor individual egg production of a group of hens. Once some have stopped laying, note the differences between them and the ones still laying. This will give you a good idea of what differences to look for in the rest of your flock. Remove as many hens in the flock as you think are not producing, and put them together. If you don't get any eggs from them, then you have successfully trained yourself to cull nonlayers.

Horse Riding Tragedy

One of our members has been injured in a horse riding accident. Her name is Vallyn Anderson. She resides in North Carolina and is the daughter of Bill and Rusty Anderson. She is now in intensive care at Memorial Mission Hospital, PICU #509, Biltmore Ave, Asheville, NC 28801. Your prayers and cards would be appreciated.



Artificial Eggs

According to a 1997 issue of The Wall Street Journal, Dr. Eustathios Vassiliou has developed a new egg substitute. The 'yolk' is composed of starch, gelatin, water, nonfat dry milk and natural egg white plus food coloring. It is enclosed in a membrane of calcium compound and seaweed extract, dropped into egg white, and frozen to give you an individual no-fat, no-cholesterol egg product you can fry.

Avian Genetic Resources Task Force
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ment on the issues of conservation, management, development, funding, and accessibility of poultry genetic stocks.

While research with poultry genetic stocks have provided valuable insights into fields in the basic sciences, biomedicine, and agriculture, a number of these stocks have been eliminated or endangered in recent years by progressive funding cuts. Largely irreplaceable, these stocks include developmental mutations, avian models for human diseases, highly inbred lines, and lines selected for certain production or immune system characteristics. The issues addressed at the conference were Conservation strategies (Should individual stocks be maintained as live animals or in a cryo-preserved form such as frozen semen and blastodermal cells?), Priorities for conservation efforts (Which stocks to preserve?), Funding sources, and Communication issues (How to make information about the genetic stocks easily available to the research community).

Up to now, the conservation of these stocks has been left to the curating researchers, dependent upon funding from research grants or the home institution. It was agreed that this method of conservation was not dependable, and that a more formal system was needed.

Classified

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PBCPFA T-Shirts, excellent quality, beautiful logo. Small, Medium, Large, and X-Large sizes are available for \$10.00 (members), \$12.00 (non-members). Contact Richard Greggs (561) 433-8157. Don't be chicken, get yours today.

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Rhode Island Red and Dominique chicks. Available in ages from one day to several months old. Contact Richard Greggs at (561) 433-8157.

FOR LOAN OR RENT:

Don't let your flock fall victim to predators! The poultry club owns a trap that members may use free of charge. Your neighbors may rent the trap for a small fee. To reserve your time to use the trap, contact Richard Greggs (561) 433-8157.

WANTED:

Newsletter articles for the PBCPFA newsletter. The deadline is the fourth Friday of the previous month. Submit articles to the editor by mail, email, or in person at the meeting.