



# Cheeps & Chirps

..... Points for Poultry Profitability

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## COVID-19 AND THE AMERICAN POULTRY INDUSTRY

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The year 2020 has not started out that great. The first problem was the COVID-19 pandemic. Agriculture was declared an 'essential service' by Homeland Security, but it still felt the impact of the coronavirus. Let's take a look at how the poultry industry in particular was affected.

It is important to remember that poultry cannot give COVID-19 to people. While poultry do get coronaviruses (e.g., Infectious Bronchitis in chickens), the coronaviruses are very species-specific. That is, coronaviruses that infect poultry do not infect people and vice-versa. While COVID-19 is considered a zoonotic disease (since people are believed to have obtained it from bats, another mammal), there is no link to chicken, turkey, beef, pork, lamb, fish, or other typical animal protein consumed in the U.S.

The first impact noted was the increased demand for poultry products at the grocery stores. People were staying home to avoid getting COVID-19 and to 'flatten the curve.' This resulted in early panic buying for many food and non-food products (i.e., toilet paper

and cleaning supplies). For the week of mother's day (May 10-15) this year, there was a 40.6% increase in retail meat sales, including poultry, as people shifted from eating out or at school, to eating at home. There was a similar run on eggs as more consumers moved to breakfast at home. Statistics indicate there are currently more than 17 million new egg buyers. But will this last beyond the pandemic?

Interestingly, the long-term trend towards organic and 'more natural' foods reversed overnight. People want more shelf-stable food items, even if that includes added preservatives.

Although there was a dramatic increase in the demand for poultry, the supply chains were not set up to meet this demand. It is not easy to switch from supplying schools, restaurants, hospitals, and other institutions, to supplying retail outlets. There was a disjoint between the supply and the consumer. The shift in

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## COVID19 AND THE AMERICAN POULTRY INDUSTRY .... *continued*

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demand required changes in processing, shipping and warehousing.

Companies began to rethink their product mix. As example, Sanderson Farms announced they are considering repurposing one their processing plants to meet the shift in consumer demand. This would require converting from big bird deboning for the food service sector to more smaller-bird, tray pack production for the retail sector. The unknown is whether or not consumers will be willing to continue to eat more at home or will they go back to eating out.

The second impact was the closing of processing plants as the employees became sick with COVID-19. For some plants that meant they had to close for a few days for a total overhaul on labor flow. Some of the preventive measures implemented in the reopened processing plants included staggering of shifts and break times to reduce workers gathering in areas such as the parking lot and locker rooms. There are also regular temperature checks and the use of transparent face shields and masks. Partitions were installed where adequate social distancing is not possible, such as along the production lines. Fans that circulate air across multiple associates have been turned off. Directional floor tape has been installed to encourage one-way foot traffic. Most importantly, they have waived the 5-day waiting period for short-term disability for associates who miss work due to confirmed or presumptive positive COVID-19, or who are under quarantine.

The media has called meat and poultry processing plants pandemic epicenters, but this is not really the case. As testing became the norm, more people tested positive for COVID-19. The general population is believed to be infected and asymptomatic. Most, but not all, of the personnel that tested positive in processing plants were asymptomatic.

The pandemic occurred at a time when oil prices hit all time lows. At the end of April, oil futures were US\$-37 per barrel. World oil trade wars were causing an over production so that global storage was in short supply. The lockdown with the pandemic also resulted in a dramatic reduction in oil consumption at the private, commercial, and industrial level. As a result, 50% of U.S.

biofuel ethanol plants are closed, or about to close, because of a loss of profits.

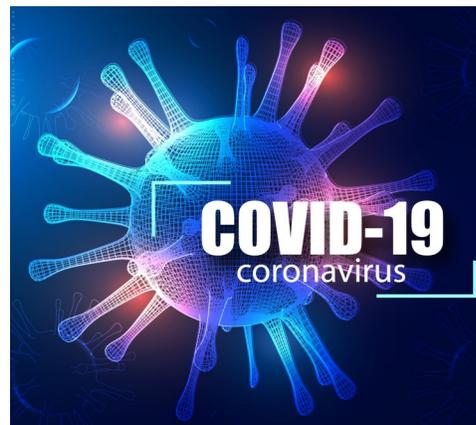
The third impact of the pandemic, therefore, has been on animal feed. DDGS is a by-product of bioethanol production and is a competitive source of dietary protein, oil and fiber for animal diets. DDGS is also higher in pigments and mycotoxins than the original corn. DDGS is used in animal feeds in levels varying from 5 to 30%, depending on the species, age, and production level.

With the reduced availability of DDGS, nutritionists have had to switch back to other dietary ingredients and protein sources. The result is a decreased use of feed grade amino acids and a required adjustment in phosphorus content. There is also an increase in the use of natural pigments for egg layers to prevent a reduction in yolk color. This would also be the case for broilers marketed with yellow skin. The skin and fat can be lighter yellow than the consumers expect. With the reduced inclusion of DDGS, there is a reduction in mycotoxins as well, so the demand for anti-mycotoxin agents will decrease.

With these three impacts, the poultry industry has had to adapt and revision itself for current and future trends.

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# 2020 KENTUCKY POULTRY FEDERATION MEMBERSHIP DRIVE



POULTRY & EGGS: KENTUCKY'S #1 COMMODITY!

The 2020 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE for the KENTUCKY POULTRY FEDERATION. We are YOUR organization and YOUR voice in Kentucky. The Kentucky Poultry Federation needs YOUR support and commitment to this organization as we enter this new year.

Membership dues are payable each calendar year. On the back of this form is a membership application. Please pay your dues by April 1, 2020.

## BENEFITS INCLUDED:

- CHEEPS & CHIRPS—a newsletter offered via e-mail. Please fill in your e-mail address on the back to start receiving.
- A lobbyist in Frankfort—a portion of your membership dues provide aggressive involvement in legislative action in regards to the security of our industry.
- Subscription to the POULTRY TIMES and THE FARMER'S PRIDE, THE SUNNYSIDE—the KPF newsletter.
- Environmental Awards—each year up to three producers are awarded the Kentucky Family Farm Environmental Excellence Award.
- Scholarship Fund—each year four students receive \$2,000 scholarships each. Two of these scholarships are earmarked for a child or grandchild of a producer who is a member of the KPF.

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## ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

Social media can bring you depressing news, but can also bring you stories of humor and joy. This was one of those stories?

A mother cat brought her sick kitten into a Turkish hospital looking for assistance. And they gave it to her.

According to the story, the medics checked the kitten out for obvious health issues while the mother cat followed them around, not letting the kitten out of her sight. Luckily both cats seemed fine but were still directed to a vet to make sure the duo were in good health. The Turks have long been known for their love and care for stray animals, with many leaving out food and water for them on the streets.



## WOMEN SPEAKING OUT FOR AGRICULTURE

The public does not always realize how many things they use and depend on every day come from agriculture. They just do not get that it is not just the food they eat. It is also the clothes they wear. Agriculture is everywhere.

The American Agri-Women (AAW) promote the welfare of our national security through a safe and reliable food, fiber, and energy supply. Since 1974, AAW members have worked together to educate consumers, advocate for agriculture, and to offer networking and professional development opportunities.

Check out the AAW website for more information and to join:

<https://americanagriwomen.org/>

Or check out their Facebook page:

[Facebook.com/AgriWomen/](https://www.facebook.com/AgriWomen/)

Check out the Kentucky branch Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/KYWomeninAg/>

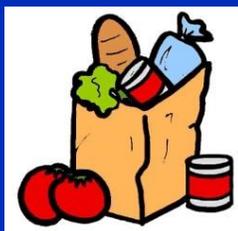
## GETTING FOOD FROM FARMS TO FOOD BANKS

As food banks have struggled to meet soaring demand from people suddenly out of work because of the coronavirus pandemic, it has been especially troubling to see farmers have to bury produce, dump milk, and euthanize hogs and chickens.

Now some states, including Kentucky, are providing more money to help pay for food that might otherwise go to waste, the USDA is spending \$3 billion to help get farm products to food banks.

As discussed in the front page article, farmers were left with little choice after the closure of restaurants and schools abruptly ended much of the demand for the food they produced.

This coincided with a spike in demand at food banks, with nearly 39 million people suddenly out of work. Thanks to various government and private efforts, at least some of the food that would have been wasted is now being delivered to the people who need it.



# Meat and Poultry Processing Employees

Things you can do at work and at home to protect from COVID-19

Accessible version: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/meat-poultry-processing-workers-employers.html>



## STAY HOME if you are sick.

- Stay in one room and away from other people in your home as much as you can.
- Talk with a doctor and your supervisor about [when you can return to work](#).

## Symptoms to watch for:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat



## Try to keep 6 feet away from other people at work and in public.

- Avoid being close to others in locker rooms, break areas, hallways, and at entrances and exits.
- Keep apart from others while talking.
- Do not share drinks or food with coworkers.



## Wear a **cloth face covering** over your mouth and nose while in the workplace or in public.

- Wear your covering snugly, but comfortably, against the sides of your face.
- When taking off your covering, try not to touch your eyes, nose, or mouth, and then wash your hands right away.
- Wash or replace the face covering after use.
- Replace the face covering when it is wet or dirty.
- Try to keep 6 feet away from others even if you are wearing a cloth face covering.
- Continue to wear the personal protective equipment (PPE) required for your normal job.



## Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol:

- Before and after work shifts and breaks
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After using the toilet
- Before eating
- Before and after preparing food
- After putting on, touching, or removing cloth face coverings



## Cover your coughs and sneezes.

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or the inside of your elbow.
- Throw used tissues in the garbage.
- [Wash your hands](#) or use hand-sanitizer right after sneezing or coughing.



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## KPF SCHOLARSHIPS

The Kentucky Poultry Federation is looking for graduating High School seniors (Spring 2020) **or** enrolled students who are attending a college, university, or technical training program, to be recipients of the KPF Scholarships. These students must have good character and determination to succeed.

The KPF will be awarding up to four \$2,000 scholarships. The recipients of the 2020 KPF Scholarships must be a child or grandchild of an employee of a Kentucky poultry complex or a child or grandchild of a grower who is a member of the Kentucky Poultry Federation, or a child or grandchild of an allied member of the Kentucky Poultry Federation.

Recipients must be residents of Kentucky. Up to two scholarships have been specifically earmarked for a child

or grandchild of a poultry grower who is a member of the Kentucky Poultry Federation.

Interested candidates should review the Application Rules and Instructions carefully and determine their eligibility.

The award winners will be announced at our 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Kentucky Poultry Festival Hall of Fame Banquet on Saturday, October 3, 2020 at the Griffin Gate Marriott Resort & Spa Lexington, Kentucky.

For consideration in the scholarship competition all Application Packets **must be electronically submitted** by **June 30, 2020**. No exceptions will be made. This application can also be found on-line at: [www.kypoultry.org](http://www.kypoultry.org).

## What do you want to read about?

We want to know what you want to read about.  
Please e-mail topics of interest to [Jacquie.jacob@uky.edu](mailto:Jacquie.jacob@uky.edu)

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