



# Cheeps & Chirps

..... *Points for Poultry Profitability*

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## KPF SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION DEADLINE IS JUNE 30

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The Kentucky Poultry Federation is looking for graduating high school seniors (Spring 2021) or students currently attending a college, university, or technical training program to apply for scholarships.

Through the generosity of KPF members and allied companies, scholarships have been established to assist students. These scholarships were created to benefit the children and grandchildren of our poultry complex employees, growers, and allied members. The KPF Board of Directors and members established this fund to help young students continue their academic careers or receive additional training in another area beyond high school.

The KPF will be awarding up to four \$2,000 scholarships. The recipients of the 2021 KPF scholarships must be a child or grandchild of an **employee** of a KY poultry company (Keystone Foods—KY Division, LLC; Cal-Maine Foods, Inc.; Cobb Vantress, Inc.; Perdue Farms, Inc.; Pilgrim's Pride, Inc.; Farbest Foods, Inc.; Tyson Foods, Inc.; Egg Innovation, LLC; Handsome Brook Farm), or a child or grandchild of a **grower** who is a member of the KPF, or a child or grandchild of an **allied member** of the KPF.

**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 KPF.

The **deadline for applications is June 30**. The applications must be submitted electronically. Awards winners will be announced at the annual Kentucky Poultry Federation Festival Hall of Fame Banquet on Saturday, October 2, 2021 at the Griffin Gate Marriott Resort and Spa in Lexington, KY. **Application forms can be found online at [www.kypoultry.org](http://www.kypoultry.org).**

Applications are evaluated based on grades, extracurricular activities, awards and honors, and answers to the essay questions. There are two essay questions. The first is a 300-word essay on what Kentucky's poultry industry could look like in 5-10 years. Examples could include how we can more efficiently tell our story; what the demography of the industry participants will look like; employment opportunities; impact of local/global food supplies; how the recent pandemic could affect the poultry industry, etc.

A 100-word essay is also required on your current area of study and what your plans are for the future.

## APPLICATIONS FOR FAMILY FARM ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

Although the applications are not due until August 31, 2021, it is never too late to start thinking about what to put in your application.

Any USPOULTRY integrator or egg processor may submit one family farm for each complex in each state supporting their operations. Any independent producer or grower who is a member of USPOULTRY may self-nominate.

It is important to think about all the things your farm and family does to promote environmental sustainability.

Describe the litter management techniques that take place on the farm. Emphasis should be placed on steps taken by the farm to enhance water quality, minimize runoff or erosion, reduce odor, and insuring proper utilization of litter or mortality.

Describe your community involvement efforts that helps promote environmental excellence or helps those outside the agriculture industry understand the operation of a poultry farm.

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## APPLICATIONS FOR FAMILY FARM ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

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Describe any conservational or wildlife enhancement techniques in use at the farm.

Describe any unique or innovative techniques utilized for mortality or nutrient management at the farm.

Describe any educational, outreach, or training programs you have utilized or participated in to learn more on environmental

management.

Describe what you see as the role and responsibility the poultry grower or producer has in environmental management or sustainability.

Collect photographs (minimum of six) that show the farm facilities.

## KPF MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

The Kentucky Poultry Federation is YOUR organization and YOUR voice in Kentucky. The KPF needs YOUR support and commitment to this organization. Membership dues are payable each calendar year. Membership dues should be paid by April 1.

Fees are:

- » Poultry contract grower/producer = \$40
- » Feed dealer, distributor & manufacturer = \$200
- » Allied firms supplying products and/or service = \$200
- » Federal and state employees = \$20



Benefits of KPF membership:

- » Cheeps and Chirps newsletter offered via e-mail.
- » Lobbyist in Frankfort: A portion of your membership dues provides aggressive involvement in legislative action in regards to the security of our industry.
- » Subscription to the POULTRY TIMES and the FARMER'S PRIDE, and the SUNNYSIDE.
- » 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 Kentucky Poultry Federation.

## STATE 4-H POULTRY-RELATED CONTESTS

Kentucky has five poultry-related contests for 4-Hers. They include the chicken and turkey barbecue contests, egg preparation demonstration contests, poultry judging contest, and avian bowl contest.

In the chicken barbecue contest, junior and senior participants prepare four bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs. The participants are judged on their cooking skills. They submit three of the four thighs for sensory evaluation.

In the turkey barbecue contest, junior and senior participants are given two pounds of ground turkey to produce 3/4 lb. burger patties. Two burgers are submitted for sensory evaluation.

The avian bowl contest is a double-elimination knowledge bowl. The contest tests participants' knowledge of poultry and poultry products.

Participation in judging and other competitive events helps 4-Hers learn to make and defend decisions and to speak in public. Poultry judging provides an excellent opportunity for 4-Hers to learn about live birds and the basis of grade and quality of poultry products.

The poultry judging contest has three divisions—past egg production, market poultry, and market eggs. In the past egg

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# STATE 4-H POULTRY-RELATED CONTESTS *(continued)*

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production division, hens are evaluated and ranked from the hen which has laid the most eggs to the one that has laid the fewest. The participants give oral reasons on one of the classes of past production hens. In the market egg division hens grade eggs based on exterior quality or interior quality. Interior quality is done either by candling table eggs or grading broken out eggs. In the market poultry division, participants grade ready to cook poultry carcasses and parts, identify ready-to-cook poultry carcass parts, and evaluate further processed poultry products.

The barbecue and egg preparation contests are individual events while the avian bowl and poultry judging contests are team events. The top seniors in each of the five contests have the opportunity to represent Kentucky at the national contests held the week before Thanksgiving in November in Louisville, KY at the National 4-H Poultry and Egg Conference.

The 4-H cooking related contests will be held July 24, 2021 at the Madison County Extension office. The avian bowl and poultry judging contests will be held at the second day of the state fair on August 20, 2021.



## MANAGING LITTER MOISTURE CONTENT

The bedding material in a poultry house serves several functions. It absorbs moisture, dilutes excreta, minimizes bird to manure contact, provides insulation from cold floor temperatures, and provides cushion for birds to lay on on reducing breast blisters.

The moisture content of litter in a poultry house is important for the health and welfare of both the birds and the farmer. Excessive litter moisture (more than 35%) may result in increased incidences of breast blisters, skin burns, condemnations, and downgrades of broiler chickens and turkeys. Litter with high moisture may also contribute to elevated ammonia levels which can cause respiratory problems to birds and farmer alike.

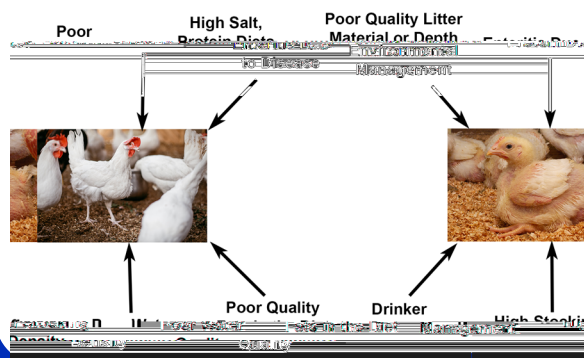
A practical way to evaluate litter moisture is to pick up a handful and squeeze it. The litter should slightly adhere to the hand and break down when dropped to the floor. If moisture is excessive, the material will stay compact even when dropped. If the litter is too dry, it will adhere to your hand when squeezed.

Several factors affect litter quality. The primary factor is the number of previous flocks and how effectively caked litter is removed. Caking will occur under the feed and water lines. Other causes of poultry litter quality include poor diets, poor quality litter, enteric disease, drinker management, stocking density, water quality, and ventilation.

If litter moisture is too high, the first thing to look out for any drafts and leaks in the poultry house. Cold spots in the environment sap moisture from the surrounding air and create damp patches. Birds are a simple indicator of a draft since they will try to avoid the area.

Other sources of wet litter may be drinkers that are set at an incorrect pressure. Leaking watering, cooling, or fogging systems can also cause problems.

Causes of poor litter quality.



Animals are a major source of condensation in a poultry house and may exacerbate wet litter if an enteric disease is present.

Keeping litter dry is all about prevention. If you wait until your litter begins to cake can be too late. It can take days or weeks of under-ventilating for the moisture to build up to the point where cake begins to form. Once litter becomes damp, it typically takes a dramatic increase in time fan settings to significantly effect litter moisture. Dramatic increases in time settings, however, can lead to increased fuel usage.

Another factor to consider is the outside environment. If it is raining a lot, then heating and heating will need to compensate. To cope with heavy rainfalls, it is important to heat up the air to increase absorption capacity so that the air in the house can pick up water from the house. The faster air that is laden with water can be pulled from the shed and replaced with fresh, dry counterpart.

Circulation fans help to remove moisture form litter in two ways. They move hot, dry air from the ceiling down to the floor level where it is needed. They also gently move air across the litter surface increasing the rate at which moisture is removed from the litter.

It is recommended that relative humidity (RH) in the poultry house be monitored throughout the day. The ideal RH is 50-60%. If RH is above 70% in the morning, your minimum ventilation is probably too low and should be increased.

Day-time temperatures are typically warmer than night-time temperatures so the RH will also be lower. As a result, more moisture can be removed during the day than at night when the outside temperatures are lower.

Recommendations:

- » Remove caked litter
- » Keep the house warm
- » Keep fans running
- » Eliminate house leaks
- » Adjust and clean drinker system
- » Use circulation fans throughout the flock
- » Check relative humidity
- » Take advantage of day/night difference

By Dr. Jacquie Jacob, University of Kentucky

## ESTIMATING COVID-19 IMPACTS ON THE BROILER INDUSTRY

Prior to COVID-19 the chicken meat industry was very strong. As with other livestock sectors, the chicken meat industry faced disruptions as a result of COVID-19. The hatching eggs set and chicks placed in grow-out farms were well above the numbers the previous year. For the first quarter of 2021, chicken meat product was 8.2% above 2020.

About 29 companies are involved in chicken meat production. This involves 25,000 family farmers across the U.S. Prior to COVID-19, about 44% of chicken production went to food service. In the middle of March 2020, American consumers found empty grocery store shelves, including the meat case.

Different sized chickens supply different clientele. Pilgrim's Pride ships an estimated 47% of its production to grocery stores and 53% to food service. Perdue, however, was dependent on grocery store outlets for about 74% of its production volume and only 19% to the food service. Wayne Farms sends 95% of their product to food service. Four percent of their product is destined for international markets.

When COVID-19 hit, restaurants closed dining rooms which affected consumer demand. There was a shift from foodservice to retail as people started cooking at home. At the same time, disruptions in the workforce affected the

chicken supply chain.

The impact on the industry depended on the markets being filled by a company. Most integrators focus on different retail chicken cuts. The whole bird, deboned, and cut-up chicken markets depend on chickens of different sizes. The processing plants are set up for specific bird sizes.

The processing and packaging of chicken is market specific. When shipping chicken to food service locations, 20- or 40-pound boxes are used. The packaging for retail outlets is very different. One of the initial challenges the chicken industry had to deal with was getting appropriate packaging material and appropriate labels to divert product from foodservice to retail.

As result, in April 2020 chick placements dropped 12.9% from the same time the previous year. It wasn't until late June that chick placement returned to 2020 levels.

In February 2020, USDA had forecast the chicken meat industry to be about 45.8 billion pounds with an average annual price of \$0.87/pound. By August 2020, however, the forecast was for only 44.7 billion pounds of chicken meat and an annual average price of \$0.704/lb.

## POULTRY INDUSTRY POST-COVID?

When COVID-19 hit the USA many offices closed and people began to work remotely. Consumers who used to routinely dined out were not having to eat at home, or closer to home.

With the COVID-19 outbreak, poultry companies had to shift production and packaging from food service to retail sales. But what will happen as herd immunity increases and more offices and restaurants open up across the country.

Workers proved that many office jobs can be done remotely. Many people found they liked working from home and it helped with a home life—work balance. Will they want to go back to the office?

Federal estimates are that the number of people working from home will triple in the coming year. In addition, some offices are expected to move to a hybrid approach, with workers splitting time between the office and their homes. As a result, it is estimated that each day 30 million meals will be eaten at home instead of at work.

What will this mean for the poultry industry? Obviously foodservice sales will rebound to some degree. But consumers became more confident in the kitchen and discovered they could cook!

There are reports of consumers trying new recipes and different cuts of meat as they became more confident cooking at home. It will be interesting to see if this trend continues.

Poultry industries are looking for a crystal ball to help them predict how consumers will react post-COVID. Will there be a new 'normal' with more cooking at home continuing, or will consumers return to their old ways and return to eating out at pre-COVID levels?





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