



California Poultry Letter

February 1997

California - Desert or Ocean?

The Golden State has **often** been called a reclaimed desert. Certainly irrigation has converted countless arid acres into productive land. However, starting this January, much of California appeared destined to become an inland ocean.

As the flood waters kept expanding, your editor attempted to check on feathered producers in problem areas. Good news was received from the Wilton/Elk Grove area. The Plumer family was evacuated and even though the river runs through their ranch, they lost no birds, livestock or property. Mrs. Bob Mitchell reported that they and their turkeys were still dry, but expressed concern for turkey producers in the San Joaquin Valley. And her concern was warranted. Possibly the largest loss of poultry occurred in the Stanislaus County area where 50,000 laying hens were lost.

Bob Shipley of the Squab Producers' Cooperative reported that members helped two growers on the flood plain of the Tuolumne relocate, as well as another grower in the path of waters **from** a levee break. While one producer did lose his home, the cooperative took justifiable pride in safely relocating all the birds.

As reports came in of an ever increasing flood area in the Manteca area, concern **shifted** to Bud Hoffman's Ranch. Checking in with Bud

on January 6th, he told me that his place was fine and he was offering his pasture to a displaced dairy producer. By the following day, I received an unconfirmed report that "Bud Hoffman's place is going under." I dialed his number, fearing the worst. After two rings, Mrs. Hoffman answered and in a cheery voice said, "Oh, the water is still two ten-acre fields from us." She went on to say that they had so many young birds on the ground, it would be almost impossible to relocate them. Eventually, the flood waters came up to within 500 feet of the Hoffman's game bird operation. Bud credited the elevated nature of his property with saving them from the flood. He told of the eeriness of still being on dry ground, but being able to look down his road and see the neighbors' buildings under water.

The greater Tracy area received wave after wave of flood waters. One of our largest breeders of standard bred poultry was forced to evacuate early on. During the five day "recommended" evacuation period, the family was able to remove their valuables and find temporary homes for 500 birds. When the levee did break, 18 inches of water covered the poultry pens and some **fifty** birds were lost. The family's home, however, did not flood and they were able to retrim home **after** 10 days. They expressed thanks to all who so willingly volunteered to house their birds during the floods and had high praise for the Animal

Control staff who assisted with the evacuations.

Also in the path of flood waters in Tracy was the Jensen Egg Ranch. Taking a cue from the efforts made by citizens to the north, the Jensens built a 6-8' berm around their ranch buildings. As of January 29th, although the rest of their area had significant flooding the Jensen ranch barrier was holding and the birds were being serviced.

Ratites were lost in California during the storm. Birds, usually kept in outdoor pens, became wet and stayed chilled as they stood in deep mud. The United Ratite Cooperative was relieved that their members in the Wilton and Marysville areas were not affected. Hardest hit were ranchers in El Dorado County. One large emu ranch was cut off when the mountainous road leading to the property washed out. Luckily plenty of feed was on the property. Birds and owners fared well until the road was reopened.

Unfortunately some ratites did perish in the Olivehurst flooding. One breeder lost all his stock, including hens in egg production. Another example of the good Samaritan spirit was the staff at a local game bird operation who offered to incubate the eggs that the breeder was able to salvage.

Our concern goes out to all who lost stock and/or property.

Given the unfortunate fact that a number of producers did lose birds during the floods, it may be necessary to dispose of large numbers of birds. Thanks to our Waste Management Specialist, Dr. Deanne Meyer, we have the following information. Dr. Meyer obtained these recommendations from Dr. George West, Animal Health Branch, California Department of Food and Agriculture.

Animal Disposal Recommendations:

1. Rendering works if animals are renderable. The major **rendering companies** in California will accept **flood mortality** and process them at no charge if animals are renderable (basically, they were picked up before waters receded).
2. For animals that cannot be rendered there are two options.
 - a. Burial is legal in some parts of California. This option requires a permit from the Ag Commissioner's Office. Depth to water table and soil type will be key factors that determine if animals can be buried.
 - b. Burning is a more complex option. Burning requires **permission** from the Air Quality Management District. The County Ag Commissioner will have the appropriate information.
3. The last option is to send mortality to landfills. The acceptability of this will vary from county to county.

There are two documents that provide further information:

Status of livestock and poultry carcass disposal in California. Emergency programs news, Animal Health Branch, No. 15, November 1994. K.L. Thomazin Editor, Victor J. Velez, Publisher.

Summary of suggested rules or guidelines for on-farm burial of dairy cows. Compiled by John H. Kirk, Extension Veterinarian, VMTRC, December 1996.

Questions related to the quality of drinking water for humans or animals should be discussed with County Department of Health.

Dr. Meyer is available to advise producers with any additional questions. She may be reached at (916) 752-9391.

Bad Bird

In late fall, the Associated Press reported that Virginia Tech's mascot, the Hokie Bird, was removed by Orange Bowl security officers for attacking the Miami mascot, the Ibis. The Ibis is, of course, a long legged wading bird. Neither poultry nor ornithology text books describe a hokie, but it does look like a turkey (sorry, John Voris).

It must have been an omen, for on New Year's Eve, back in Miami, Virginia Tech went down to defeat in the Orange Bowl.

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Vanishing Farm Animal Genetic Resources

The Canadian Foundation for the Conservation of Farm Animal Genetic Resources, The Centre for Food and Animal Research/ Research Branch, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and The Canadian Agri-Food Research Council is sponsoring an international speakers forum to address farm animal genetic resource conservation. Canadians and non-Canadian alike are concerned over the continuing loss of genetic stocks.

Presenting one of the keynote addresses, "The Great Barnyard Gene Drain" will be Professor Emeritus Roy Crawford. Dr. Crawford is retired from the Dept. of Animal and Poultry Science at the University of Saskatchewan at Saskatoon and is the author of Poultry Breeding and Genetics.

Scientists from the University of California will be joining colleagues from around the world to address this critical topic.

Turkey Meat as Human Tissue Model

Some in the scientific community continue to argue that birds make poor models for human biomedical research. Given that, I was pleased to read in the 1996 Program for the Radiological Society of North America that turkey breasts are being used in the teaching of sonography for the human breast.

Radiologists from across the country are using the turkey breasts to demonstrate various invasive procedures for the breast that are sonographically guided. The techniques demonstrated included the aspiration of cysts, core biopsies and needle localization of tumors.

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American Farm Bureau Federation Establishes Animal -- Health Committee

The American Farm Bureau Federation's (AFBF) Board of Directors has authorized a new advisory committee. The Animal Health Committee will begin its activities early in 1997. The 16 member committee consists of four members selected at large from the aquaculture, beef, dairy, egg, poultry meat, sheep and swine committees, plus 12 members selected at large to provide diversity of species coverage and production methodologies.

David Vande Bunte of Bryon Center, Michigan is the Poultry and Egg Representative. One of the at-large members is Francine Bradley of UC Davis. She was nominated by California Farm Bureau Federation President, Bob Vice.

Values of Farm Bureau Membership

The California Farm Bureau Federation's (CFBF) Commodity Advisory Committee for Poultry is being chaired this year by Ken Mitchell of Elk Grove. Other committee members include: Sharyn Felts, Tom Fry, Kevin **Tenborg**, Bob Mitchell (alt.), Ron Thomas, Paul Demler, Frank Hilliker, Steven Glaum, George Armstrong, and Jerry Armstrong (alt.). Others contributing to the Committee are Anne Downs (Industry Liaison), Bill Mattos (Industry Liaison), Alan **Armstrong** (Young Farmers and Ranchers), John Voris (UCCE), and Francine Bradley (UCCE).

CFBF is undoubtedly the most widely known agricultural organization within our state. Both legislators and media personnel routinely contact CFBF first when they wish to gain information and insight into any aspect of California's food production system.

Currently CFBF and the national organization, American Farm Bureau Federation, are working to amend the Endangered Species Act and are pushing for reform in the area of Wetlands, the Central Valley Project Improvement Act of 1992, and Grazing Fees/Rangeland.

To join your local county Farm Bureau, look in your white pages under- " _____ (County Name) Farm Bureau." If you have any difficulties or if you are a member and wish to be involved in the Poultry Committee, call Bruce Blodgett, CFBF, (916) 924-4000.

The Poultry Committee for 1997 is without members from Stanislaus, Fresno, Sonoma, or Riverside. These are major poultry areas and should be represented at the statewide level.

It's an Actor, It's a Movie Star... No, It's Delmar

If you have been watching any television lately, your attention may have been drawn to an **IHOP™** (International House of Pancakes) commercial. The person doing the interview is walking down a country lane talking to a rancher. Although the spokesman makes a reference to being in "America's heartland," the background may remind you of Petaluma and it should. If like me, the quick close-up of the rancher's face looks familiar to you, then you will be happy to know that the star of the commercial is long time Petaluma egg producer, Delmar Friedrichsen.

Due to his well-received appearance in the **IHOP™** commercial, Delmar was approached by producers making a commercial for the Subway™ sandwich chain. Delmar was flown to South Africa for the filming of this commercial. Watch for the new Subway™ advertisements and look for Delmar walking through a wheat field.

I know I was saddened recently when a certain group of libation-promoting bull frogs and their commercials were pulled. But I won't miss them at all if I can watch California egg producers instead.

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Avian Sciences Seminars at UC Davis

Avian Sciences Departmental seminars are held on Tuesday afternoons (4: 10-5:00 p.m.) during the academic quarters. Seminar speakers are solicited from on and off the campus and cover a wide range of avian topics.

(continued on page 7)

Avian Sciences Seminars (continued)

The Winter Quarter seminars will be held in Room 2154, Meyer Hall. All seminars are open to the public. Parking near **the** building does require a permit (daily fee - **\$2.00**). The schedule for February and March 1997 is as follows:

February 18 - Contaminants in Black-crowned Night Herons and Other Birds in California, Roger **Hothem**, USGS Biological Research Division, D a v i s , C A .

February 25 - Selenium Effects on Birds in the San Joaquin Valley, Joe Skorupa, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Sacramento, CA.

March 4 - Integrated State of the Art Strategies for Recovering Endangered Species, Bill Everett, Endangered Species Recovery Council, San Diego, CA.

1997 Calendar

February 11-12, Northwest Poultry Workshop, **Sweetbrier** Inn, Tualatin, Oregon 97062. **Phone 800/551-9167** for room reservations. For additional information contact Connie Burmester, P.O. Box 3003, Portland, OR 97208; Telephone **503/777-1320**; Fax **503/777-2373**.

February 27-28, International Speakers' Forum, Canadian Farm Animal Genetic Resources: Crisis or Opportunity? Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. For more information contact Dr. S.K. Ho, Centre for Food and Animal Research/Research Branch, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0C6; Telephone **613/759-1429**, Fax **613/759-1465**.

March 1, **American** College of Poultry Veterinarians-Sponsored Hatchery Workshop, Sacramento, California. Continuing education workshop on the effect of the hatchery on **hatchability** and **chick/poult** quality. Registration is \$100 and seating will be limited to 100 participants. Dr. Jose Linares **206/ 885-1414**.

March 1-4, **46th** Western Poultry Disease Conference, Sacramento, CA. Registration forms available in early 1997 from Lina Caparas, Conference and Event Services, UC Davis **916/757-3331**.

March 8, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Field Day, UC Davis. Poultry Judging Contests, Avian Bowl and other competitive events for **high** school students. For registration materials contact Linda **Whent 916/752-3040**.

March 10-11, North American Food Safety Education Workshop: Food retail and food service. Holiday Inn, College Park, Maryland. This workshop is sponsored by the National Educational Forum for Food Safety Issues (NEFFSI). NEFFSI will bring together speakers **from** academia, industry, and government for science-based discussion on food safety issues. **Eight** hours of continuing education credits are available from the National School Food Service Association, **the** American Association of Family, and Consumer Sciences, and the American Dietetic Association.

April 15-18, Pacific Egg and Poultry Association Annual Convention, Palm Springs, California. **916/441-0801**.

April 19, Picnic Day, UC Davis. Annual campus open house. Open to the public; free.

June 25-27, Oregon/Washington Poultry Industries Joint Annual Convention, ~~Inn of the Seventh~~ Mountain 18575 SW Century Drive, Bend, Oregon 97702. Phone 1-800-452-6810 for room reservations. For additional information contact Connie Burmester, P.O. Box 3003, Portland, OR 97208; Telephone **503/777-1320**; Fax **503/777-2373**,

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