



Megan Bean

DEPARTMENT of Poultry Science: Supporting a Major Mississippi Industry



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MAFES personnel in the Poultry Science Department are actively involved with research that increases the scientific knowledge related to poultry and poultry production.

Current research support for Mississippi's poultry industry includes work with nutritional needs, waste management, reproduction and bird health

A significant amount of the research conducted in the department focuses on the nutritional needs of commercial broilers and how changes in their diets affect weight gain and other factors. The information generated by this research is important in helping the poultry industry formulate feed rations.

Current research projects in the Poultry Science Department include a series of experiments to define the effects of social interaction among chickens in flocks and how they impact the birds' well-being. The project already has demonstrated that laying hens that are normally housed in cages become extremely upset if isolated from other nearby chickens, actually causing more distress and physiological stress than any other known factor. As a result, experiments are under way to determine the ideal density for commercial broilers.

Evaluations of the growth and yield of broilers from different genetic strains also are being conducted in the department. Since each strain of broiler has been selected to excel in a specific area of growth or yield, it is important to know the specific responses of each strain to a host of nutritional and management factors. MAFES poultry scientists are working closely with primary breeders and the commercial broiler industry on these studies.

In addition, the department's personnel are engaged in research with litter use, basic microbiology issues specific to poultry production, and processing, food safety, disease and physiology.

For more about research in the Department of Poultry Science, visit www.msstate.edu/dept/poultry/.