



Official Statement from Alabama Poultry and Egg Association in Regard to COVID-19

Alabama's poultry industry is committed to providing an uninterrupted supply of eggs and chicken products while safeguarding the health of everyone in the supply chain, from farmer to consumer. Currently, there is an ample supply of poultry products to meet demands. However, if processing facilities are forced to shutter, a shortage may be possible. We are encouraging all consumers to only purchase what they need from grocery stores.

Poultry production and processing accounts for almost 90,000 essential Alabama jobs and generates over \$15 billion in economic impact each year. Alabama is responsible for processing more than 22 million broiler chickens per week. With the COVID-19 pandemic affecting every county in the state, it is inevitable this disease will impact members of our poultry family.

As of now, Alabama's 18 processing facilities are processing at about 90 percent capacity. Methods are also being implemented to slow poultry growth and the total amount of processed poultry in an effort to avoid depopulation due to supply chain transitions. These include setting less eggs and adjusting lighting management for broiler chickens to slow growth.

Our industry already had some of the strictest biosecurity protocols in the nation. From the decontamination procedures service techs follow between farm visits to the food safety standards applied in processing plants, the health of the chickens, workers and consumers is a priority. The U.S. has the safest and most regulated, affordable and abundant food supply in the world, and there is no evidence the virus can be transmitted through food.

In recent weeks, poultry companies have increased health and safety precautions at their facilities. These include barriers between employees; increased health screenings; deep cleaning between shifts; facilitating social distancing by staggering breaks; emphasis on remaining socially distant while a work and not at work; restricting plant access to only essential personnel; increased employee education and training; encouraging employees who feel sick to stay home; and providing flexible paid sick leave.

The poultry industry has been declared essential critical infrastructure by the Department of Homeland Security, Gov. Kay Ivey and President Trump. We take this responsibility seriously. Our affiliated farmers, poultry companies and allied industries are working hard to protect employees while keeping the food we all need on the grocery shelves.

The mission of the Alabama Poultry and Egg Association is to serve the common interest of the Alabama poultry industry through education, communication, research and public affairs involvement.

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