Meet Your MTGA Member: Sharlene Wittenburg

1. What is your favorite thing about raising turkeys?

My favorite thing about raising turkeys is walking a barn, checking equipment, litter conditions and overall turkey health; and then looking back as I walk to see the turkeys following and the curiosity they have for you as their caretaker.

2. What is the most challenging thing about raising turkeys?

The challenging thing about raising turkeys is their daily health. Having constant awareness of their health and reacting to any health signs we see as soon as possible. As an ABF grower this is critical.

3. What is the biggest “life lesson” you have learned on the farm?

My biggest life lesson that I have leaned on the farm would be two things; daily responsibilities and not taking shortcuts. I am responsible for the turkeys’ performance and if I took a shortcut it would affect the turkeys’ overall performance. This transfers over to life as well.

4. What is your favorite way to eat/serve turkey?

My favorite way to eat turkey would be to roast a whole turkey in the oven and making gravy from the turkey’s natural drippings.

5. If you weren’t a turkey farmer, what would you be?

If I weren’t a turkey farmer, I probably would have went into the nursing field.

IMPORTANT: NPIP Biosecurity Principles

By Dr. Dale Lauer & staff
Minnesota Board of Animal Health

The 2015 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) event involved poultry producers, companies and animal health officials in Minnesota and other Midwestern states. We can all certainly agree that it was an incident we never wish to experience again! Analysis of the 2015 event and epidemiologic studies indicated that in Minnesota there was a mix of different introductions to a farm and then farm-to-farm spread of the H5N2 HPAI virus. Collectively the goal of the Board in cooperation with poultry producers is to have systems for their farms in place that won’t allow them to be the first case of HPAI. Without a first case we won’t get a second, third or fourth case. Expectations for preventing or reducing future introductions require increased biosecurity measures from those used prior to the outbreak in most operations. To standardize biosecurity practices and expectations, the USDA-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) proposed an interim rule: “Conditions for Payment of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Indemnity Claims”. This rule clarified an existing policy for the payment of indemnity of eggs and provides a formula for the split of indemnity between poultry/egg owners and parties which the owners enter into contracts with to raise or care for the eggs or poultry. The rule also requires large1 owners and contractors to certify that at the time of detection of HPAI in their facilities, they had in place and were following a biosecurity plan that would prevent the spread of avian influenza. All sectors of the poultry industry recognized the need to incorporate basic biosecurity principles into the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP) as accepted minimum management practices that all producers should be able to follow. After the interim HPAI Indemnity Rule went into effect, the General Conference Committee (GCC) of the NPIP worked on a set of poultry biosecurity principles to be added to the NPIP Program Standards. The GCC which includes members from across the country has Drs. Jill Nezworski and Ben Wileman from Minnesota as representatives for the West North Central Region. At the September 2016 NPIP Biennial Conference a 14 Point Biosecurity Principles document was proposed and passed unanimously by NPIP Biennial Conference Delegates. The intent of these basic disease prevention principles is to have minimum management practices that poultry operations must follow to be eligible for indemnity in the event HPAI is detected in their facility. Each premises should have a biosecurity plan that includes but is not limited to, these NPIP biosecurity principles.

On May 5, 2017 the Minnesota Board of Animal Health along with other NPIP State Agencies were notified that the proposed changes to the NPIP Program Standards were official. This included the 14 Biosecurity Principles which became effective July 5, 2017. The

NPIP Biosecurity see page 11
14 Biosecurity Principles are:

(1) Biosecurity Responsibility
(2) Training
(3) Line of Separation (LOS)
(4) Perimeter Buffer Area (PBA)
(5) Personnel
(6) Wild Birds, Rodents and Insects
(7) Equipment and Vehicles
(8) Mortality Disposal
(9) Manure and Litter Management
(10) Replacement Poultry
(11) Water Supplies
(12) Feed and Replacement Litter
(13) Reporting of Elevated Morbidity and Mortality
(14) Auditing

Per the HPAI Indemnity Rule, these Biosecurity Principles will be required for all commercial poultry premises with the following exemptions of annual production levels less than:

- 75,000 for table-egg layers
- 25,000 for upland game birds and waterfowl
- 100,000 for broilers
- 30,000 for meat-type turkeys

Despite these exemptions, most industry experts agree that all commercial poultry operations should and likely will participate.

The Next Steps – The auditing portion of these principles falls under the oversight of the NPIP Official State Agency in each state. In Minnesota, the Official State Agency (OSA) is the Minnesota Board of Animal Health, and it will be responsible for conducting the audits and providing an audit summary to USDA-APHIS. All audits will be paper audits; there will be no site visits. Audit materials may be provided in either paper or electronic formats. The Board has begun the process of notifying veterinarians and producers of these changes and is gathering information about Minnesota poultry facilities (average number of birds produced annually, number of premises that would all follow one “company-specific” biosecurity plan, primary contact or biosecurity coordinator, etc.).

For more information on the Biosecurity Principles, Audit Guidelines and a Biosecurity Audit Form, go to the NPIP website (www.poultryimprovement.org). Under the left hand column, select NPIP Program Standards -> Biosecurity Principles.

The Board will continue to provide updates as the Biosecurity Audit process moves forward. For questions, contact Dr. Dale Lauer or Dr. Shauna Voss at the Minnesota Poultry Testing Laboratory [320-231-5170 or poultry@state.mn.us].

For assistance or resources on how to implement these principles on your farm, contact Abby Neu [320-235-0726 x 2019 or neux0012@umn.edu] at University of Minnesota Extension - Poultry.

1 Large is defined by the Interim HPAI Indemnity Rule as annual production levels per premises greater than:

- 75,000 for table-egg layers
- 25,000 for upland game birds and waterfowl
- 100,000 for broilers
- 30,000 for turkeys