

## Ohio News Watch



opportunity in Ohio, Mack says. “If you look at a map of the U.S. grain belt, Ohio is closest to the northeast population centers of the U.S.”

Niche market demand may also be contributing to the increase in small-scale poultry production. Levi King, who manages his family’s custom poultry slaughtering plant in Darke County, says the plant has been busy since his parents opened it in 1994. “Every year since 1994 we’ve done more business than the year before.”

The Kings’ processing plant is one of only two state-inspected custom poultry processors in Ohio. This year they’ll custom-slaughter over 100,000 birds for other people. The family also raises their own chickens and turkeys, processes them, and sells them through small local grocery stores, health food stores and their own market. They’re targeting a premium market for birds raised on non-GMO grain. “There’s a demand for it, but cost is always an issue,” King notes.

King estimates that 60% of the birds they process go into the freezer of the person who raised them. The other 40% are resold, many through farmers markets. While he sees new people starting into poultry production every year, King says he also sees people leaving the business

yearly. Profit margins sometimes turn out to be smaller than producers expect, he says. “With poultry, your money is made on volume.”

#### Flu fears

So far, avian influenza hasn’t infected any Ohio flocks, but that doesn’t mean it hasn’t affected Ohio poultry producers.

“Obviously, we’re concerned about it,” says Cassie Jo Arend, communications coordinator for Cooper Farms. Cooper Farms, like other poultry producers around the state, has stepped up biosecurity and restricted visitors to minimize the chances of spreading the disease. Producers are also working together to share information about the disease and how it can be managed, she notes.

Stricter biosecurity is “the new norm of the industry,” says Doug Mack, chief operations officer for Trillium Farms. The company has added new procedures for showering and for cleaning and disinfecting vehicles and equipment.

“It’s not only good for preventing avian influenza, it’s good for improving food safety,” he says.

In June the Ohio Department of Agriculture canceled all live bird exhibitions at county and independent fairs to

avoid spreading the disease to the state’s commercial flocks. The highly pathogenic avian influenza H5 outbreak was linked to migratory birds and was found in 15 states, including Indiana. More than 48 million birds have been affected across the country.

## News Briefs

### Pumpkin crop takes a hit

Ohio farmers harvested fewer pumpkins this year compared to the 2014 crop, and the fruits were smaller than usual, according to experts with the College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at Ohio State University. Jim Jasinski, OSU Extension educator, cited these reasons:

- A wet spring and early summer delayed seeding past the optimal planting window, which is early June to late June or early July.
  - Sporadic heavy rains flooded fields and drowned out many pumpkin seedlings around the state, and then most of the state experienced near drought-like conditions from mid-July through August.
  - The state’s pumpkin crop was affected by downy mildew.
  - The lack of rain during the latter part of the growing season impacted the development of fruit.
- “Since pumpkins are mostly water, they didn’t size as big as they normally would have, unless they were irrigated,” Jasinski says. As a result of all these factors, he estimated the pumpkin market in Ohio is down by 20%, compared to a normal year.

### Dobbs joins Seed Consultants

Seed Consultants Inc. welcomes Dylan Dobbs as a new area seedsman covering key parts of southwest Ohio. Dobbs holds a degree in agriculture from Wilmington College. He completed several internships in the seed industry while in college and has a strong background in agriculture, growing up on his father’s farm.

Volume 311 | Number 11

## CONTENTS

Ohio News Watch .....	3
Opinion & Mailbox .....	18
Crops .....	20
Irrigation Extra .....	IE1
Machinery & Technology .....	44
Conservation .....	50
Farm Management .....	56
Livestock .....	61
Marketplace/Classified .....	70
Buckeye Living .....	78
Marketing .....	79

## CONTACT US

**Editor:** Jennifer Kiel, [jennifer.kiel@penton.com](mailto:jennifer.kiel@penton.com), 710 W. Park St., St. Johns, MI 48879 989-224-1235

**Contributing Editors:** Curt Arens, Tom J. Bechman, Bryce Knorr, Fran O’Leary, John Vogel and Mindy Ward

**Contributing Writer:** Gail C. Keck

**Senior Editor:** Holly Spangler, 309-926-6082; [holly.spangler@penton.com](mailto:holly.spangler@penton.com)

**Executive Director, Content and User Engagement:** Willie Vogt, [willie.vogt@penton.com](mailto:willie.vogt@penton.com)

**Sales:** Jeff Smith, 217-877-1662

**Subscription questions:** 800-441-1410

For additional sales and company information, see the last page of the Marketplace or Classifieds section.

**POSTMASTER:** Please send address corrections to Ohio Farmer, 255 38th Ave., Suite P, St. Charles, IL 60174-5410.