

2015



NATIONAL
Turkey
FEDERATION

Letter from the Chairman



Dear NTF Member,

Last February, we gathered in Puerto Rico for our Annual Convention and a celebration of NTF's 75th Anniversary. We celebrated the families that built the industry and who, in many cases, remain a key part of its infrastructure. Their names are chronicled in the history of the poultry business. Their value as living history should be recognized for how we harness the lessons of the past to the challenges of the future.

A year ago at this time, we had a foreshadowing of what would become the dominant issue of 2015: Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza. The single California case in January gave way to the multiple cases of March and April then May and June when farm after farm was hit by HPAI. The losses were personal and heaped heavily upon the shoulders of communities and companies from the West Coast to the Midwest.

As your 2015 Chairman, my thanks and admiration go to everyone: the growers, processors, breeders, hatchers, distributors, allied service suppliers and state associations who are the NTF family. My heartfelt thanks go to the staff of the NTF for their skill and support to advocate on the side of the industry throughout the hazards of a trying year.

Industry producers and processors held together, worked together, supported the concerns of one another and continued to push forward on our long term goals. As I've seen so many times in my years with NTF, we not only met the challenges, we perhaps exceeded our own expectations. We launched our *20 by 2020* project to influence those who in turn influence consumers and foodservice operators. Shoppers discovered new exciting and zesty turkey products and flavors. Diners enjoyed unexpected additions of turkey on their menu.

Opportunity in America and forward momentum for the turkey industry has all the endless possibilities that we might imagine the founders of NTF saw for the future some 75 years ago. Our main drive today is to continue to produce a healthy and safe protein and make our industry more creative, efficient and competitive.

You have heard the story of the beginning of the National Turkey Federation. One man joined with four others interested in promoting turkey. By the next year, their group of 5 grew to 500 . . . then 5 thousand. They started alone. They built momentum. They built a federation for the turkey industry.

As we close our 75th year, still we have all those endless possibilities ahead of us, as they did.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Douglas". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Jihad Douglas
2015 Chairman
National Turkey Federation

Letter from the President

Dear NTF Members,

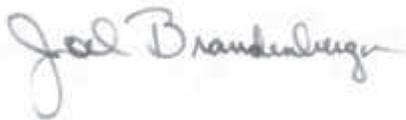
Within these pages, the 2015 Annual Report offers perspective and context, although the best account of the past year is found in the depth of character and commitment by members of the National Turkey Federation. Meeting the challenges of HPAI and pursuing opportunities to increase turkey demand, our members had perhaps their finest hour in the manner in which they continued to produce safe, high-quality, nutritious products for American consumers, even in the face of terrible adversity.

Many of the analysts, market speculators and the news media were wrong about predicting holiday turkey shortages. But they were right about the safety of the food supply and rightly generous in their praise of the resilience of American turkey producers.

The consumer is more involved in what they eat and their family's health. That's quite a change from thinking their food comes from a store instead of the farm. This is the opportunity to share our skill in the thoughtful and practical raising of turkeys. Consumers are also seeing and hearing more from the turkey brands. That's what the *20 by 2020* program – which launched in the midst of last year's challenges – is all about. The commitment of the members to move forward and sustain this project is another sign of this industry's resilience and dedication.

It's also a sign of momentum in the industry.

As we close the 75th Anniversary year, we may see our present times in the words of NTF founder Charles W. Wampler Sr. when he wrote, "The challenge to the National Turkey Federation is to look for opportunities to serve this vastly changed and fast-moving industry. It is also a challenge to make happen the opportunities for greater service, to buckle down to the hard work and the new approaches of keeping pace. Certainly, there are challenges and problems. And we can be thankful for them, because without problems, there would be no work to do and no great accomplishments to be achieved."



Joel Brandenberger
President
National Turkey Federation



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Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza



Courtesy: Iowa Turkey Federation

The winter-spring of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in 2015 struck upper Midwest states like nothing seen before, causing unprecedented losses not only to turkeys, but egg-laying chickens. While intensive biosecurity efforts held losses to 3 percent of the turkey population, more than 153 turkey farms were impacted; most were within concentrated areas of the upper Midwest, resulting in farmers losing nearly 8 million turkeys. After the last case in June, turkey processors and growers, state associations and state officials maintained their vigilance. That vigilance will be needed again into 2016.

Devastating to farmers and rural communities, causing immediate financial and emotional hardship, future earnings were also significantly affected because of the additional time for composting and to clean turkey barns before they could be repopulated. As state and federal officials dispatched response teams, NTF and state associations cleared

bureaucratic obstructions, connected available resources with onsite needs, assisted passage within control zones to processing plants of live cargo verified clear of HPAI, and pushed for depopulation and disposal to ensure timely cleanup and disinfection to return farms to production. At NTF's insistence, APHIS agency officials dropped an initial prohibition against farms previously infected from being allowed to repopulate within a 10 kilometer radius of active HPAI cases.

“Initially, federal and state governments missed a critical opportunity to sit down with industry to develop a defined game plan. This would avoid the mass confusion that we experienced in Iowa.”

- Brad Moline, Iowa turkey farmer, July 2015 congressional testimony reviewing HPAI response.

In addition to producer-direct losses of \$530 million for turkeys, the economy-wide loss for destroyed production is conservatively estimated at nearly \$3.3 billion. NTF has closely reviewed with USDA/APHIS specific aspects of indemnification rates, calling on the agency to adjust the rates to ensure compensation is for the “fair market value” of the birds, as the law requires.

Timely results from pen-side testing and electronic and paperwork streamlining of reporting, and dispatching crews are among many frontline responses to prepare for a recurrence of HPAI. NTF, in conjunction with USPOULTRY, the United Egg Producers, the National

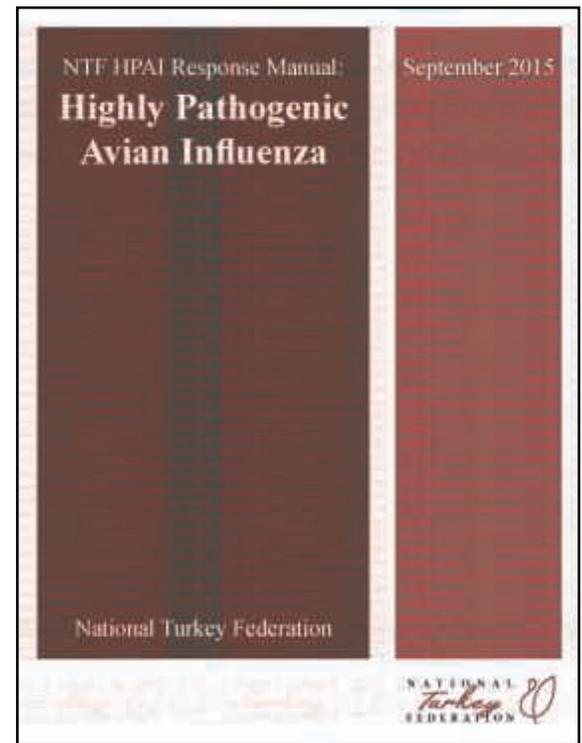
Chicken Council and APHIS, convened a summer “Lessons Learned” conference in Iowa to examine and discuss the outbreak and determine the best ways to prevent future ones. NTF authored a HPAI manual of quick reference resources, expanded best practices and disseminated a summary of USDA/APHIS guidelines and updated response plans. NTF lobbying resulted in streamlined depopulation and clarification of available grower options, expanded disposal methods and a USDA/APHIS pledge to prompt, 24-hour depopulation under presumptive positive findings in most cases.

After being overwhelmed by the unprecedented cascade of farm after farm falling to HPAI, USDA hired hundreds of veterinarians and other temporary workers to respond to any future outbreak. As a follow-up, NTF pressed for a comprehensive look at the epidemiology of the HPAI spread, including the impact of delayed depopulation on the spread of virus and biosecurity lapses onsite by APHIS contractors.

As growers remained on guard against HPAI, preparation now requires written, site-specific biosecurity plans. All commercial poultry producers must be prepared to self-certify that biosecurity procedures were in place at the time of any future detection of HPAI. NTF developed an audit tool for growers with guidance for members' biosecurity plans within the NTF HPAI Response Manual.

While growers have prepared to exceed the levels of previous safeguards and federal resources are pledged to respond timely to HPAI infection, NTF has relentlessly pushed for turkey farmers to have the option of vaccine as an additional means to eradicate the disease. NTF encouraged new vaccine seed strain development within USDA's Agricultural Research Service and APHIS, providing growers with the opportunity to speak with researchers. With identification of an effective vaccine candidate, USDA has since stockpiled vaccine, to build an immune defense as well as reduce the virus load generated and save birds against HPAI. NTF sought and received APHIS' determination that non-vaccinated offspring of vaccinated breeders would not be considered "vaccinated" despite presence of maternal antibodies.

Although securing vaccine stockpiles, APHIS – bowing to outdated trade rules – has not approved the use of vaccination to respond to HPAI. APHIS would require careful consideration of the efficacy of the vaccine, any impacts of using HPAI vaccine in the field, and the potential trade impacts. To address trade concerns, NTF is promoting the ability of modern science to Differentiate Infected from Vaccinated Animals – known as "DIVA" – so that trade partners could be assured that antibodies produced by our vaccination of birds could clearly be distinguished from birds infected with the virus. By fall of 2015, USDA reported to the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) that the U.S. was free of HPAI, exceeding the six-month definition. While working to regain our export markets, NTF worked closely with APHIS to establish regionalization plans with key trading partners to reduce the trade impact of HPAI, yet too many other nations continue to exclude U.S. poultry to protect their producers from economic competition, not the HPAI disease that is endemic in those countries.



"The world recognizes that the science has changed and that vaccines can be used effectively to eradicate virus"

- Joel Brandenberger, NTF President to Bloomberg Business

Community Cooperation, Consumer Confidence

Communities and turkey producers bonded through the personal losses and financial uncertainties. NTF meanwhile kept the policymakers and public attentive throughout the course of the disease in the long winter into spring. Gathering members and coordinating with other poultry and egg groups, NTF arranged briefings on initial APHIS epidemiological findings and biosecurity recommendations in conference calls, through webinars with researchers and newsletter alerts. Members of Congress sympathized and learned firsthand from turkey farmers brought to Washington by NTF to urge practical response and effective funding to combat HPAI as a national threat to the nation's poultry supply.

While the virus seriously threatened the livelihoods of individual farmers, communities of processing plant workers and their local economy, NTF provided the national context of diminished but yet reliable turkey supply for daily consumption. Consumers were reassured that ample supplies of whole frozen turkeys were in cold storage for Thanksgiving, offered at favorable discount prices. Mindful of assuring availability of turkey and continued consumer confidence, NTF assured that turkey remained center plate at the Thanksgiving Dinner. This proactive engagement ensured that news stories as well as economic reports conveyed the stability of the overall turkey inventory and factual, non-alarmist messages of the safety of the food supply and competence of the

turkey industry to eradicate those HPAI cases and maintain national production.

Throughout the hardships of HPAI, the turkey farmers, processors, and their communities continue to prove the resilience of the nation's turkey industry, meeting the challenges worthy of celebration of the 75th anniversary of working together as the National Turkey Federation.



Courtesy Iowa Turkey Federation

Brad Moline's son, working with newly stocked poults after Moline Farms was cleared of avian influenza

Influencing the Conversation

The National Turkey Federation's *20 by 2020* project aims to broaden the discussion of turkey for more daily meal enjoyment, drawing upon the commitment of NTF growers, processors and allied suppliers to utilize a targeted, cost-effective campaign to reach those who influence both consumers and foodservice operators. Completing its first full year of activities, NTF continues to develop attractive and informative resources for use by dietitians and chefs on the flavor, versatility of cuts and lean protein nutrition of turkey meat.



Turkey became a focus for discussion as we joined supermarket registered dietitians at well-attended nutrition seminars and other professional gatherings. At these meetings, NTF representatives were on the agenda, addressing trending food topics, and we were on the menu with turkey selections during the events' receptions and dinners. Those influencers found a new home for information presented for them on *ServeTurkey.org* and companion social media platforms where our chef and nutrition panels shared expert tips and insights inviting consumers to experience *Today's Turkey: Serve up something unexpected.*SM

With consumers' new-found interest in where their food comes from, chefs and dietitians welcomed talking firsthand with growers and processors and valued personal visits to farms and NTF engagement at culinary schools. This effectively offset activist screeds and highly edited undercover video fundraiser appeals.

NTF's *20 by 2020* project assembled a Culinary Advisory Panel of innovative chefs and menu planners from *Chili's*, *Applebee's*, *Red Robin*, *Wendy's*, *PDQ*, *Luby's*, *Cafeterias* and *Fuddruckers* to attend the prestigious Culinary Institute of America's kitchen classes to develop a deeper knowledge of turkey's versatility. Well-respected registered dietitians advising clients and consumers through high-traffic social media sites and major supermarket dietitians with *Giant Eagle*, *Festival Foods* and *Meijer* traveled across rural communities from farm to fork to examine how turkeys are raised and prepared for market. They asked smart questions, learned fact from myth and returned to their companies to add turkey to restaurant menus, and praise the dedication of growers and processors in blogs and radio programs.

Impressed with first-year results for quality of this economical strategy to leverage the advice of influencers, NTF's Executive Committee endorsed a 50 percent increase of voluntary funding from NTF member grower-processors and allied suppliers to fund the project in 2016. NTF's persistent focus on turkey's versatility for meals and lean tasty protein benefits is aimed at demonstrating an increase in the profitable consumption of turkey in the direction of 20 pounds per capita by the year 2020.



Dietitian Shari Steinbach holding a poult during the Farm to Fork tour.

It's All About The Bird

While NTF's 20 by 2020 project goal is to increase the daily use of a wider consumption of portions with new meal combinations, the whole turkey retains a unique place as the centerpiece of holiday meals, with 46 million turkeys prepared at Thanksgiving and another 22 million enjoyed for Christmas Dinner. NTF's 68th presentation of the National Thanksgiving Turkey to the President of the United States by 2015 Chairman Jihad Douglas, president of Aviagen Turkeys, Inc., featured the company's Nicholas breed that originated in California's Sonoma Valley.



National Turkey Federation Chairman Dr. Jihad Douglas looks on as President Barack Obama receives the National Thanksgiving Turkey. California turkey rancher Joe Hedden is pictured at left.

"America leads with an abundance of blessings shared by today's remarkable agriculture production and symbolized by the tradition of the National Thanksgiving Turkey."

- 2015 NTF Chairman Jihad Douglas

The chairman's selection of California's Foster Farms as the grower of the presidential flock made for an appropriate setting for raising the National Thanksgiving Turkey and his alternate. The company's creative promotion attracted major market media attention and the opportunity to have the public appreciate how preparation of the turkeys for the White House event matches the care taken in raising turkeys for their family dinner table.

Just days before Thanksgiving, the two turkeys boarded a United Airlines jet for the cross-country flight designated "Turkey One." NTF partnered with Dulles International and Reagan National airports in honoring the turkeys' arrival in Washington with restaurant specialties promoted on signs throughout their terminals featuring NTF recipes for turkey. Rather than being served as the center of the Thanksgiving meal, the turkeys that flew to Washington were the center of attention at a press conference amid the historic elegance of the Willard InterContinental hotel's Crystal Room. Throughout their months of preparation for the White House, the turkeys owned their own *PresidentialTurkey.com* website, Facebook page, Twitter account, and Spotify playlist.

The day before Thanksgiving, and in keeping with custom, President Obama "pardoned" the National Thanksgiving Turkey, "Abe", and its alternate, "Honest". California school children had suggested the names for consideration. The public had voted through NTF's Facebook page for the bird that would earn top billing as National Thanksgiving Turkey.

While national attention remained on NTF's signature event of the White House presentation, two additional turkeys from the presidential flock had also been flown from the West Coast for an appearance that evening on network television. On the busiest travel day for rail, Amtrak made possible the secure and dependable transport of the turkeys from Washington's Union Station to New York's Penn Station nearest Wall Street for CNBC network's *Closing Bell* financial news program.

NTF Immediate Past Chairman Gary Cooper arranged to be in New York City outside the New York Stock Exchange with the birds for the live interview about the business of raising turkeys. The news segment carried memorable points about turkey's super protein lean meat. The interview assured the viewing audience of consumers and business investors that in managing the challenge of HPAI with skill and determination, the nation's turkey growers and processors had delivered wholesome and plentiful turkey supplies for the holidays. Having captured the good will and attention of national audiences, the Wall Street turkeys and the National Thanksgiving Turkey and alternate were retired to their official "forever home" at Morven Park for visits by the public to the 1930s champion-breed turkey farm of former Virginia Governor Westmoreland Davis.

Supply and Price Questioned, but Never in Doubt

The resilient business of breeding, hatching, raising, processing and marketing of turkey decisively met the challenge of HPAI in 2015. As devastating as the outbreak was for individual growers and processors and the communities hit by the virus, NTF worked with state associations and member companies to inform the consuming public and market analysts that producers would rebuild their flocks. The supply of turkey remained assured throughout the year.

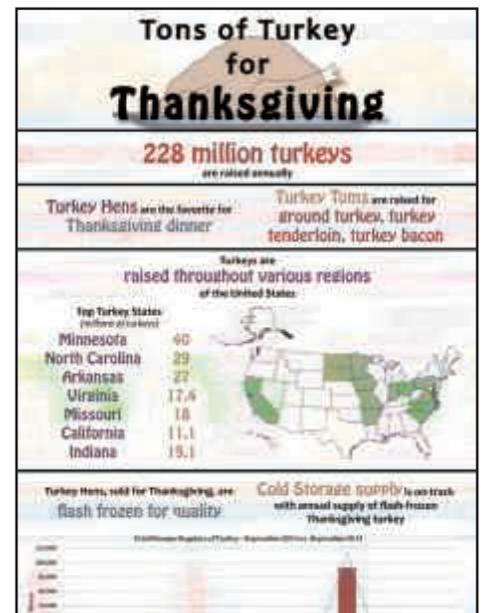
From March to June, as the virus progressed through the upper Midwest, NTF provided reporters, market analysts and agricultural economists perspective on the widespread availability of daily turkey meat raised throughout more than 25 states. Public realization brought appreciation for the diligence of producers and veterinary officials to hold HPAI to a single, 3-percent loss of the nationwide turkey population.

As fall arrived, Thanksgiving supplies became the subject of news media speculation that NTF calmed by explaining how frozen turkey hens were already in stock based on official *USDA Monthly Cold Storage Reports*. Explaining the importance of the Thanksgiving promotion of turkey prized by store retailers, NTF prevailed in news stories with the reasoning that frozen turkey is 80 percent of the preferred consumer market and official reports maintained that cold storage was on track with previous years.

NTF produced a visual illustration "infographic" for newspaper reporters with an animated version distributed to television stations and websites to also illustrate the cold storage supply story. NTF's close tracking of retail turkey sales through USDA also proved assurances of affordable pricing for Thanksgiving turkey as grocers again offered their seasonal deep discount promotions to attract more holiday shopping. In 2015, turkey remained the undisputed preferred meat at Thanksgiving Dinner, with consumers finding America's Bird in plentiful supply and sold at a penny per pound less than in 2014.



Turkeys from the presidential flock, have their moment in the spotlight of Wall Street.



Members Benefit



Past NTF Chairman, Gary Cooper, welcoming members to sunny Puerto Rico

National Turkey Federation members remain the source and the benefactors of innovation and profitability for the turkey industry. Members guide policy initiatives, gain insights on business, stay current on research and share in the experience of more than three generations of progress. NTF members exercise leadership on the Executive Committee and Board of Directors, and participate through committees focused on turkey health and welfare, regulatory, legislative, communications and membership.

Sharing experiences and strengthening professional friendships, NTF members met in Puerto Rico for the 2015 Annual Convention and NTF's 75th Anniversary celebration. Generating a record number of attendees, the popularity of the gathering was heightened by the agreeable Caribbean climate and the attraction of the U.S. territory's economical airline connections. Celebration of the 75th Anniversary offered perspective on modern advancements and the dedication of pioneers from turkey farming families who have sustained progress for successive generations.

“Although many changes have taken place in all phases of the turkey business, one fact stands out: The need for a strong and well-coordinated national turkey organization to look after the interest of its members is just as great as in the last 25 years, and there is evidence to indicate it is, or will become even greater.”

– August 1964, M.C. “Maggie” Small, NTF Executive Secretary

Members bring their practical views to Washington during the summer NTF Leadership Conference in personal meetings arranged by NTF with their legislators at the U.S. Capitol and with federal regulators in government agencies. Federal officials gain a first-hand understanding of the impact that laws and regulations have on the turkey business. NTF concludes the day's visits by bringing members together in a reception featuring savory varieties of turkey to attract congressional leaders and their hungry legislative staff. Those congressional offices experience the appetizing versatility of turkey while making a personal connection with many of NTF's best representatives in the turkey business.

Where birds of a feather gather, NTF has created an attractive evening event adjacent to the IPPE expo in Atlanta, an opportunity for turkey industry leaders and prospective members to gather and network.

Plan your upcoming NTF opportunities:

2016 Leadership Conference in Washington, DC – July 11 – 13

2017 Annual Convention at Orlando's Grand Floridian Resort and Spa – February 5 – 8

2018 Annual Convention at San Diego's Marriott Marquis Marina Hotel – February 21 – 24

NTF is the national advocate raising awareness for its members' products, while strengthening their ability to profitably and safely deliver wholesome, high-quality, and nutritious food to consumers worldwide. NTF represents growers, processors, hatchers, breeders, distributors, allied services and state associations. NTF is found at EatTurkey.org, on Twitter @TurkeyGal and on Facebook as Turkey. The Perfect Protein®

Results with Congress

The National Turkey Federation maintains a trusted relationship developed with federal government decision-makers who have come to rely on NTF for practical viewpoints in considering proposed legislation. NTF's reliability is essential for representatives and senators to appreciate the implications and the reality of challenges facing the turkey industry. And when turkey businesses battle a crisis of the proportions of avian influenza's devastation, NTF's established ties of trust, advice and experience clear hurdles and streamline the federal response.

Providing producers' stories of HPAI to congressional committees in July 2015, NTF arranged for Manson, Iowa turkey farmer Brad Moline's memorable testimony that declared he was living the avian influenza nightmare. The virus wiped-out two thirds of his family farm income with the loss of all his 12 growing barns containing more than 56,000 turkeys. Meeting turkey farmers, processors and grower representatives provided by NTF on a regular basis builds an additional level of confidence in the ability to find workable solutions and prompt action.

NTF legislative skills harnessed the opportunity to focus support for critical poultry research when Congress fashioned a comprehensive budget agreement that included \$114 million to fully fund renovation and upgraded the facilities of the Southeast Poultry Disease Research Laboratory (SEPRL) in Athens, Georgia. The laboratory was instrumental in identifying a vaccine sequence for the goal of HPAI virus eradication in turkeys. Through the joint effort of NTF with United Egg Producers and the University of Georgia, SEPRL funding ensures the vital work to more adequately address emerging and exotic diseases threatening poultry.

The Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS), which requires specific amounts of corn to be blended into ethanol, continues to loom as a threat to industry profitability. EPA's haphazard mandate-setting during 2015 again set blending amounts aggravating a boom-and-bust cycle of volatility. NTF remains determined to see Congress reform or repeal the RFS as the best answer to ensuring a reliable corn supply. However, with corn and oil prices relatively low NTF is not expecting significant changes to ethanol policy in 2016.

Direct contact with voters and farmers has a lasting impact on elected officials. NTF's Grassroots Take Action website has helped members to easily communicate with their members of Congress through electronic letters that directly convey the voice of the turkey industry. This year, NTF members focused their grassroots efforts on several issues, sending more than 300 letters in support for turkey research funding, reform/repeal of RFS and support for a consistent food labeling standard. NTF member engagement produced successful results for a remarkable record of grassroots advocacy.



Turkey grower Brad Moline, of Moline Farms, testifying before the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry, regarding the avian influenza outbreak.



(Left to Right) John and Joni Burkel and Carl Wittenburg meeting with Senator Heidi Heitkamp (right from center) during NTF's annual Leadership Conference



Through the steadfast financial support of NTF members, TURPAC, the turkey industry's political action committee, remains influential in the election of congressional candidates who support the common goals for production of turkey in the United States. NTF member contributions to TURPAC have steadily increased to provide for an effective platform supporting the commitment to practical and common sense legislation and national policy for the business of raising turkeys.

NTF's Political Action Committee (PAC) is one of the largest and most active PACs within the meat and poultry sectors. Thanks to the generosity of turkey industry leaders across the country, TURPAC had great success in 2015 raising \$241,485 in contributions to exceed its fundraising goal of \$190,000. Several states joined with their own record-breaking results:

- Iowa, chaired by Ed Garrett, had a record breaking year with \$97,000 in contributions
- Ohio chaired by Dianne Cooper, raised more than \$35,100
- Minnesota/Wisconsin/North Dakota chaired by John Zimmerman set an all-time state record with over \$26,000 raised (bolstered by new in-state TURPAC events)
- Indiana, led by Phil Seger, raised an impressive \$23,450 in contributions
- Michigan, led by Dan Lennon, had a great fundraising effort with over \$19,000 raised

Seeking Practical Solutions

FDA's Guidance #213 will take effect in December 2016, ending on-farm production use of antibiotics that FDA deems "medically important" for treating bacterial infections in people. Though final implementation is months away, a shift in usage already is beginning in the turkey industry. FDA also is increasing the role veterinarians will be required to play in dispensing the antibiotics that remain. While growers adjust, researchers seek to identify alternative treatments that could be beneficial in supporting turkey health.

In 2015, the Obama administration elevated its effort to slow the emergence of antibiotic-resistant bacteria by hosting a White House Conference in which NTF participated. However, during the day-long forum, agricultural and hospital use discussions were conducted among separate groups, depriving both sectors the benefit of an exchange. Additionally of note this year, The President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) released its review in which it stopped short of pinning the entire blame for resistance on agriculture. "While it is clear that agricultural use of antibiotics can affect human health, what is less clear is its relative contribution to antibiotic resistance in humans compared to inappropriate or overuse in health care settings," their report said.

FDA, however, is continuing to move forward in limiting antibiotic use. The Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) final rule was released this year and was accompanied by draft guidance for industry #233 which reviews questions and answers for animal drug sponsors seeking approval for a recommended VFD. The revision will bring antibiotics used in animal feed under a process similar to the prescriptions used for animal drugs administered by water. Use of an antibiotic in feed for the first time must be accompanied by a written order. The implementation date for label changes of feed grade medications to VFD status is December 31, 2016, which is also the compliance deadline for Guidance #213.

In mid 2015, FDA's Feed Mill Rule (officially the Current Good Manufacturing Practice and Hazard Analysis and Risk-Based Preventive Controls for Food for Animals), revised the definition of a "farm" to ensure the vast majority of feed mills in the turkey industry are covered, and must comply with, the rule. However, "fully vertically integrated" operations are exempt for the time being, which applies to livestock operations where the animals or birds, the farm and the mill are all owned by the same entity. Any operation that sells less than \$2.5 million worth of feed annually is allowed three years to meet the regulatory paperwork and four years to finalize their preventive control plans.

USDA has also sought a more focused regulatory control over poultry inspection. The New Poultry Inspection System remains an option for poultry plants and NTF continues to move forward and assist processors as they consider adopting the revised inspection system. FSIS enacted this new system in order to position food safety inspectors throughout poultry facilities and allow processors to opt to sort their own product for quality defects prior to federal inspection. This would free federal inspectors to focus on other important work while processors can have their workers focus on quality assurance and ensure they are presenting wholesome meat for inspection.



Farm to Market

Driver concerns for the safe delivery of ag commodities and for the welfare of their live cargo has been managed through NTF's collaboration with livestock organizations. Over the past year we were able to collectively gain approval from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) to waive rest break requirements for truckers carrying live animals. The rule had required truck drivers to take a 30-minute rest break for every eight hours of service. During extreme outside temperatures, this break also would have limited hog, livestock and poultry haulers from caring for their live cargo during those rest periods.

NTF's work with federal regulators in 2015 also focused on Ground Turkey Performance Standards for a science-based food inspection system that continues to improve food safety for regulations issued in early 2016.

Cast as the most disturbing overreach ever by EPA to control farmland use of ponds and streams upriver from major Waters of the United States, WOTUS galvanized agricultural producers and activated legislators and federal judges to suspend nationwide implementation of the EPA plan. At the close of 2015, the EPA was cited by the Government Accountability Office as having engaged in covert propaganda, violating anti-lobbying laws in its use of social media to urge public support for its rule designed to expand the agency's authority.



While food production is already highly regulated, federal efforts at influencing consumer choice of foods was brought to the forefront with the development of the newest edition of the Dietary Guidelines, which occurred throughout 2015. NTF exerted support for continued inclusion of lean meat and measured caution in recommendations regarding processed meats and sodium levels. The Dietary Guidelines' influence over meal choices extends most importantly into the purchase of turkey products for USDA feeding programs as well as throughout federal food service operations. Turkey remains well-positioned as a lean protein, low calorie meat choice, that is nutrition-packed and low in sodium and saturated fats with an acknowledged "health halo" that others in the meat industry grudgingly covet.

The U.S. conversation over food was briefly overrun by a United Nations' World Health Organization International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) report that implausibly placed processed meats in the same carcinogen category with cigarettes, cancer-fighting drugs and radiation therapy. As public ridicule of the broad categorization grew, NTF highlighted other scientific reviews of turkey breast deli meat which applaud its extremely low levels of saturated fat, presence of key nutrients and vitamins, including Vitamin B, an especially good source of iron.

As a member of the federal Advisory Committee on the agreement, NTF has published initial comment on the extensive text of the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade pact. While supportive of free trade principles, NTF is reserving its full support, disappointed with provisions for very limited amounts of turkey from the U.S. into Canada, especially compared with other commodities. There are, however, positive impacts in the trade agreement's provisions that require science-based decisions when trade partners claim food safety reasons for blocking entry of U.S. products. TPP also adds strong regionalization favorable to limiting wholesale bans against U.S. poultry when HPAI is detected in a portion of the U.S.

Celebrating 75 Years

With the unanimous vote of representatives from 30 turkey-producing states, the National Turkey Federation was incorporated on July 23, 1940. In that era, many current NTF member families launched their own businesses. Several would continue through the next 75 years to celebrate company milestones, sharing the common bond of experience in the turkey business. In 2015, NTF rekindled those memories and experiences in a 75th Anniversary Annual Report and accompanying half-hour documentary DVD with bonus material of rarely-seen historic films of 1930s turkey drives and archival promotional features on turkey. The contrasts across those 75 years are witness to the production advancements from when plucked turkeys were sold in ice barrels “New York Dressed”. As well, as the memories of harsh devastation of turkey flocks from the 1940 Armistice Day Blizzard foreshadowed the 2015 “High-Path” Avian Influenza outbreak that lay just beyond the anniversary celebration at the Annual Convention.



Three generations ago, NTF founder Charles W. Wampler, Sr. had seen the need for special emphasis on development and marketing the turkey within the wider organization of poultry interests. He and four others at the 1939 World Poultry Congress were determined to create a national organization “for the turkey people.” Wampler years later recounted that he had come home, printed a letterhead with the names of 17 influential growers and breeders of turkey, and wrote each that they had been elected director of the National Turkey Federation. They each responded promptly; glad to accept the responsibility, not questioning how they were elected and not knowing at the time there were just five members.

By the end of 2015, the 75th Anniversary celebration of the National Turkey Federation had marked the progress of, and underscored the determination of, its members to provide a daily source of healthy protein while retaining its unique place at the center of the holiday table. Yet members remained firmly committed to the longer term vision of the profitable increase in consumer demand of turkey at 20 pounds by the year 2020. In the just-recent past, 1996 per capita demand reached as much as 18.5 pounds. In 1937, per capita consumption of turkey didn’t even amount to as much as three pounds. History and business take the long view. As with our founders, today’s members respond promptly to any need, accept the responsibility for wholesome production of turkey, and would rarely question why they elected to be in the turkey business, knowing they have common support of hundreds of others as members of the National Turkey Federation.



A Year in Photos



The National Thanksgiving Turkey and alternate strutting at their news conference with national and international reporters.



Courtesy Scott Morgan/The New York Times/Redux

Brad Moline walks his turkey barn restocked in the months after HPAI.



Amtrak's canine security inspects turkeys from the presidential flock headed to their TV appearance on Wall Street.



NTF Lifetime Achievement Award winner Paul Marini, thanking his wife Leslie for standing with him as he advanced science benefiting the turkey industry.



NTF's 20 by 2020 project brings dietitians right to the source of wholesome turkey production.

NTF Staff

Joel Brandenberger, President
Damon Wells, Senior Vice President, Government Affairs
Lisa Wallenda Picard, Vice President, Scientific and Regulatory Affairs
Keith Williams, Vice President, Communications and Marketing
Jennifer Zukowski Dansereau, Vice President, Member Services
Leslee Oden, Legislative Director
Andrew Bailey, Scientific and Regulatory Affairs Manager
Kimmon Williams, Public Relations Manager
Sarah Trujillo, Member Services Coordinator





1225 New York Avenue NW, Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20005
Tel: 202.898.0100
Fax: 202.898.0203

info@turkeyfed.org
www.EatTurkey.org
Twitter: @Turkeygal
Facebook: Turkey. The Perfect Protein