



CONFIRMED AVIAN INFLUENZA FOUND IN GA COMMERCIAL FLOCK

A flock of chickens at a commercial poultry breeding operation located in Chattooga County has tested positive for H7, presumptive low pathogenic avian influenza (LPAI). This is the first confirmation of avian influenza in domestic poultry in Georgia. Avian influenza does not pose a risk to the food supply, and no affected animals entered the food chain. The risk of human infection with avian influenza during poultry outbreaks is very low.

The virus was identified during routine pre-sale screening for the commercial facility and was confirmed as H7 avian influenza by the USDA National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) in Ames, Iowa. As a precaution the affected flock has been depopulated. Officials are testing and monitoring other flocks within the surveillance area and no other flocks have tested positive or experienced any clinical signs.

Owners of poultry flocks are encouraged to closely observe their birds and report a sudden increase in the number of sick birds or bird deaths to the state veterinarian's office at (855) 491-1432.

(Source: GA Dept. of AG)



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Morgan County Dairy Farmer Everett Williams Named Georgia's Farmer of the Year for Holding on to Tradition by Innovating Constantly

For 39 years, Morgan County, Georgia, dairy farmer Everett Williams has helped chart a new path for the state's dairy farmers.

New technologies and constant innovation have allowed the Williams family to grow the size and productivity of their herd while making Williams Dairy, just outside of Madison, a model for stewardship and sustainability in the dairy business.

On March 21, 2017, Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal recognized Williams' lifetime of work and dedication to agriculture when he named Williams Georgia's Farmer of the Year. Williams will represent Georgia at the Sunbelt Agricultural Expo in Moultrie, Georgia, in October, when the Swisher Sweets/Sunbelt Expo Southeastern Farmer of the Year Award is presented.

Lucy Ray, University of Georgia Cooperative Extension coordinator for Morgan County, nominated Williams because of his family's dedication to that county's agriculture, their family's agricultural legacy and their stewardship of the land.

Williams has held many leadership positions in the Morgan County agricultural community over the years and is considered a leader in Georgia's dairy industry.

He is currently president of the Georgia Milk Producers and member or board member of several other civic institutions. His wife Carol Ann Williams is president of the Georgia Dairy Youth Foundation, serves on the board of the Georgia Junior Livestock Foundation, and is vice-president of the Georgia Cattlewoman's Association.

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Gov. Nathan Deal congratulates Morgan County dairy farmer Everett Williams after naming him GA Farmer of the Year at a ceremony March 21 in Atlanta.

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Continued: **Williams Named 2017 GA Farmer of Year**

Both are strong advocates for the dairy industry, spending time talking to civic and youth groups about the impact of Georgia's dairy's and offering tours of their dairy to anyone with an interest.

Williams' father, John E. Williams, converted their family's land in Morgan County from a cotton farm to a dairy in 1958. Everett Williams remembers the transition and has continued his father's work. The farm now milks 3,700 heifers daily and feeds them on pasture and silage crops grown over 3,657 acres.

Everett Williams received a bachelor's degree in animal science from the UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences in 1975. He worked away from the farm for three years before returning in 1978 to help manage the farm and to raise his family.

He and Carol Ann raised four children on the farm: Justin Williams, 36; Daniel Williams, 34; Katie Williams, 28 and Michelle Williams, 27. All four have returned to Morgan County to help take the WDairy into its third generation. *(Source: University of Georgia)*



It's Looking Like Smooth Sailing for Governor Perdue's Nomination

*Written by Lynne Hayes,
Growing America*

It was a long time coming, but Sonny Perdue finally got his chance to sit before the senate committee and answer their long list of questions about the future of agriculture.

Perdue, a working farmer who briefly practiced as a veterinarian and also spent time in the U.S. Air Force, opened the hearing with a sincere statement of his commitment and love of agriculture, saying that when he returned to farming, it "has been my life ever since," and that "agriculture is in my heart."

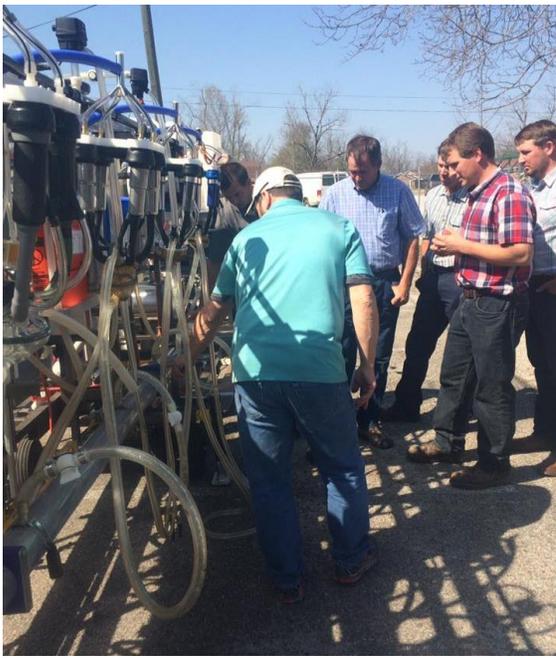
At the hearing led by committee chairman, Sen. Pat Roberts R-Kansas, Perdue was queried on many topics as the committee tried to gauge his attitudes about everything from trade and immigration to crop insurance, conservation and working with the EPA.

The former Georgia governor, if appointed, will be shouldering the job of crafting the 2017 Farm Bill and setting the tone and path for the Ag industry's next five years.

The topic of volatile price swings in dairy prices and the need for a total reform of that pricing structure was also broached, and Perdue indicated he agreed that the dairy industry could not survive without such an overhaul.

Also with regard to dairy, the committee asked Perdue for his thoughts on the H2A visa program. Visa holders are an important resource for dairy farmers who rely on these works to milk their cows—but the length of time allowed on the H2A visas is too limited and needs to be changed. Perdue said he's committed to working on resolving the issue.

The hearing lasted nearly two and a half hours and, for the most part, was a friendly exchange of questions and answers. Perdue was the last Cabinet nomination announced by President Trump in January. While there are still other Cabinet posts to be confirmed, Perdue is the last of the Cabinet nominees to come before their jurisdictional committee in the Senate.



MQ-IQ Teach Parlor Workshop Provides Unique Learning Experience for Georgia

This month, Georgia Milk Producers sponsored three unique milk quality workshops in Waynesboro, Tifton and Jackson with Dr. Roger Thomson and Paul Peetz of MQ-IQ Consulting. The workshops reviewed best management practices for mastitis prevention, milking equipment performance and maintenance; and featured The Teaching Parlor®, a one-of-a-kind portable training device designed to simulate a real milking parlor.

Georgia Milk Producers would like to thank the Burke County Extension Office, UGA Tifton Dairy and Central Georgia EMC for graciously hosting our meetings. This Georgia Dairy Managers Series was also sponsored by IBA, Boehringer Ingelheim and DeLaval. Many thanks to them for their support!

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Total U.S. Fluid Milk Sales Declined in 2016, But Up in Southeast *Written by Calvin Covington*

As shown in the table below conventional sales were 1% lower in 2016 compared to 2015, while organic sales were up 5.7%.

ESTIMATED FLUID MILK SALES 2010-2016

Year	Conventional (million lbs.)	% change from previous year	Organic (million lbs.)	% change from previous year	Total (million lbs.)	% change from previous year
2010	52,861		1,812		54,673	
2011	51,665	-2.3%	2,074	14.5%	53,739	-1.7%
2012	50,693	-1.9%	2,157	4.0%	52,851	-1.7%
2013	49,240	-2.9%	2,265	5.0%	51,505	-2.5%
2014	47,643	-3.2%	2,474	9.2%	50,118	-2.7%
2015	47,028	-1.3%	2,437	-1.5%	49,665	-1.3%
2016	46,564	-1.0%	2,576	5.7%	49,140	-0.7%

Source: Dairy Market News and Fluid Milk Products Sales Reports

Even though total fluid sales were down, there is some good news in the numbers. The sales decline in 2016 is the lowest percentage decline in many years. For the third consecutive year, whole milk sales are up. 2016 conventional whole milk sales were almost 5% higher than 2015, and organic whole milk sales were 16.5% higher.

Combined fluid milk sales in the three southeastern orders, were 0.2% higher in 2016 versus 2015. The Florida order was responsible for the increase with sales up 1.6%. Unfortunately, all of Florida's increased sales were due to milk processed outside of Florida by non-Florida processors. Non-Florida processors sold almost 85 million lbs. more milk in the Florida market in 2016 compared to the previous year. While sales by Florida processors was down by almost 55 million lbs.

SOUTHEASTERN FLUID MILK SALES (2010 – 2016)

Year	Florida (million lbs.)	Southeast	Appalachian (million lbs.)	Total
2010	52,861		1,812	
2011	51,665	-2.3%	2,074	14.5%
2012	50,693	-1.9%	2,157	4.0%
2013	49,240	-2.9%	2,265	5.0%
2014	47,643	-3.2%	2,474	9.2%
2015	47,028	-1.3%	2,437	-1.5%
2016	46,564	-1.0%	2,576	5.7%

Dixie Dairy Report – March 2017

Calvin Covington

Increasing milk supply and inventories. January 2017 milk production, according to USDA, is 2.5% higher than a year ago. January marks the fifth consecutive month production increased more than 2%. Texas and New Mexico led the nation with January production up 19.2% and 15.3%, respectively. In the Northeast, New York produced 3.8% and Pennsylvania 2.0% more milk this January compared to last January. Production in Michigan was up 3.5%. Production growth slowed in Wisconsin with production only up 1.0%. January production was also lower in the nation's largest dairy state, California. For the two southeast reporting states, Florida and Virginia, production was down 1.3% and 0.7%, respectively. The nation's dairy herd is estimated at 9.36 million head. This is 6,000 more cows than December and 56,000 more cows than a year ago. At the end of January the butter inventory was almost 14% higher than last January and American cheese inventory over 6% higher.

Commodity prices dropping. Both block cheddar and barrels, at the CME have declined about \$0.25/lb. over the past month. Nonfat dry milk powder, trading at the CME, dropped about \$0.15/lb. during the same period. February was the first decline for the AMS nonfat dry milk powder price since last April. CME butter has done better, only going down about \$0.08/lb. since the first of February. Reasons for the drop in commodity prices include: increasing milk supply, building inventories, stronger U.S. dollar and concerns over trade policies.

Price projections lowered. We project February blend prices in the three southeastern orders to drop about \$1.00/cwt. from January. Due to an increase in the March Class I Mover we project March blend prices to be similar to February. However, our projections for the next few months are lower than last month. Currently, we anticipate April blend prices about \$1.00/cwt. Lower than March. For the entire calendar year we project average blend prices, in the three southeastern orders, to average about \$1.75/cwt. higher than last year.

Domestic disappearance of butter and cheese up again 2016. As reported below, domestic disappearance of cheese was 3.4% higher last year compared to 2015, and butter was up 4.7%. Domestic cheese disappearance has increased every year since 2008, and butter since 2010. On the export side, both butter and cheese exports were down last year. High domestic prices, relative to world prices, make U.S. butter and cheese less competitive on the world market. However, powder exports set a new record last year. Powder exports in 2016 were almost double the volume of powder the U.S. exported ten years ago.

YEAR	CHEESE		BUTTER		NONFAT / SKIM POWDER	
	<i>Domestic</i>	<i>Export</i>	<i>Domestic</i>	<i>Export</i>	<i>Domestic</i>	<i>Export</i>
	<i>(millions lbs.)</i>					
2010	10,217.6	381.8	1,524.1	93.6	1,001.3	845.8
2015	11,357.0	698.7	1,803.0	37.3	1,075.6	1,230.0
2016	11,744.1	632.8	1,888.1	34.6	1,035.8	1,249.8
% Change 2016 vs. 2015	3.4	-9.4	4.7	-7.3	-3.7	1.6

Source: USDA: Economic Research Service