Poultry Ban Lifted

The ban on gatherings of live poultry that was initiated in mid-May in the wake of an avian influenza (AI) outbreak was lifted in West Virginia on Nov. 9. The outbreak affected 21 states and 50 million birds, and eventually became the largest animal health incident in United States history. Although human health was never at risk, the economic impact of the disease was immense.

That said, we are still urging all West Virginia poultry producers to be on high alert for signs of avian influenza in their flocks, whether they have commercial poultry houses or just a small backyard flock. The WVDA continues to monitor the animal disease situation at the national and international level on a daily basis and this ban could be imposed again at any time.

No new cases of AI have been reported since mid-June when the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) concluded response actions at affected farms. However, experts think wild birds may continuously carry such viruses and the risk for a reappearance in domesticated fowl is a distinct possibility.

Although West Virginia was not among the states affected earlier this year, our most valuable Agriculture sector is commercial poultry. The broiler (meat chicken) industry is centered in the Eastern Panhandle, near the Pilgrim’s Pride processing plant in Moorefield. The poultry sector also includes meat turkeys and egg production associated with both types of birds. USDA estimates the combined value at $355 million. A substantial turkey genetics operation in Greenbrier County is not included in USDA’s statistics.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Fairmont couple brings unique twist to ancient honey beverage

They say everything old is new again. A Fairmont couple is brewing up an ancient drink to serve to their very 21st century clientele.

Tom Maltby and Ruthann Smith began making mead more than a decade ago. Back then it was only a hobby. “We had already been making it out of our home and giving it to friends and family as gifts,” explains Ruthann. “Everyone kept saying we should be making this professionally.”

Both Tom and Ruthann had very busy careers. After weighing their options, the couple took a leap of faith five years ago. They now own Mountain Dragon Mazery and Honey-Wines.

“This is a lot more satisfying business. I spent 20 years as a computer programmer. After spending two decades thinking in 0’s and 1’s, you either go into management or you change,” says Tom.

And what a change it’s been. “This business keeps my hands in the earth and gets me outside,” says Tom. “It’s a much happier mesh for my talents.”

Mountain Dragon Mazery focuses solely on mead. The beverage dates back to 8,000 BC in Northern China. “In general, mead is any fermented honey. In specific, it’s only honey, yeast, and water,” explains Tom.

“People tend to associate mead with syrupy sweetness. There are meads out there that fit that niche but it wasn’t something that appealed to us. We’re doing European peasant-style mead that’s made to come out a wine-strength beverage, which is dry. Maybe 10 percent of the meaderies in the country are focusing on dry mead.” The taste is fresh, crisp, wine-like yet subtly different.

“We call it a drinker’s mead. It’s something that makes the body happy,” says Ruthann. “It doesn’t have a bunch of extra sugars or chemicals to fool with the digestion. It settles well and is, from our point of view, and I’ve heard a lot of people support this, a much more euphoric beverage than most alcohols.”

It all begins with the bees. The couple have their own hives near Catawba or the Monongahelia River in Marion County that feed on wildflowers and tulip poplar trees. Another bee keeper has several more of their hives in Mineral County where the bees focus in on basswood. The Tulip Poplar Honey Wine has a fruity taste, the Basswood Honey Wine more of a peppery palate.

Mead dates back to 8,000 BC in Northern China. Tom Maltby and Ruthann Smith started Mountain Dragon Mazery about five years ago and focus on a less-sweet European peasant-style, which is dry. Mountain Dragon Mazery is located at 1516 Morgantown Ave. in Fairmont. You can reach the business at www.mountaingarazeny.com, on Facebook, or by calling 304-534-8716.

Mead, continued on page 3

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How Does Your Garden grow

How much food can you grow on one acre in urban West Virginia? The West Virginia Department of Agriculture set out to find the answer. The results are in.

“We don’t grow much here in West Virginia,” said Commissioner of Agriculture Walt Helmick. “We’re trying to get the movement back to the earth. We want to set the example.”

The goal behind the demonstration gardens comes down to giving people an idea of what they can grow on a small plot of land, how much it costs to get your garden growing, and how much money a fruitful harvest can net.

It all started back in the spring. Two test plots, one in Kanawha County and the other in Wood, were chosen and prepped for planting. A plastic and drip irrigation system, installed at both sites, suppressed weeds and kept moisture in the ground even during the driest weeks of the summer.

Peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers, green beans, squash, corn, and zucchini started out in greenhouses and then made the transition into the two test fields in July.

WVDA employees tilled the gardens. The workers used lime, fertilizer, and urea nitrogen on the test acre near Riverside High School in Kanawha County. The Parkersburg plot relied on zero chemicals making it 100 percent organic.

The biggest setback arrived in May. Weeks of rain kept the plots soggy into early-July, delaying planting. That also made it difficult to weed the gardens. The heat and sun finally dried things up just in time for picking season starting in August.

Piles of peppers, scads of squash, and tubs of tomatoes came out of the ground. Workers collected, counted, and then delivered the produce to several charities.

Manna Meal in Charleston, one of those groups, used the fresh veggies from the garden to feed hundreds of hungry in the Capitol city. People also took the leftover veggies home for future meals. In Wood County, part of the produce went to the First Lutheran Church in Parkersburg. The organization set up a produce stand next to their community garden. Those in need bagged up what they could use to take home.

“These test gardens were a win/win for everyone involved,” said Commissioner Helmick. “Not only is the WVDA learning facts and figures to help urban farmers, the needy received nutritious meals.”

The gardens started yielding fresh produce in August and it just kept coming for months on end. Workers picked the final peppers in late October. The totals by season’s end – impressive.

The investment in the Riverside garden totaled $2,301. That included $754 for the cost of water to irrigate the site, $546 for the plants and labor, and other miscellaneous items such as tomato stakes, fertilizer, and diesel fuel for the tractor. The potential revenue, using prices obtained from current USDA retail values, totaled $16,842.75. If you subtract the investment cost, that comes out to a net gain of $14,541.52.

Over at the Parkersburg plot, the investment totaled $3,377. Tomato stakes ate up the largest part of the budget at $1,500. Workers planted more tomatoes in Parkersburg than the Riverside site. The potential revenue for the Parkersburg plot came out to $18,388.24. Take away the investment cost for a net total of $15,010.82.

In order to make a garden profitable, the grower must find a way to turn their crop into cash. It could come from farmers markets, selling to local schools, or even a roadside stand. The source needs to be reliable.

“Those net totals for one acre can’t support a family of four for a year. However, it can make a nice addition to your established income,” said Helmick. “Take a look at the potential profits if you were to expand to four or five acres. It’s amazing what the earth gives back.”

Helmick stressed the profits aren’t a guarantee. A year with too much rain or blight might lead to serious cuts in the profit margin. However, since the crops were diversified, the chance of an entire garden failing to produce is less likely.

The takeaway from the garden demonstration shows with some hard work, favorable weather, and a little good luck, a garden can grow your income.

To see the full report on both gardens, log on to: www.agriculture.wv.gov.

Walt’s View, cont. from page 1

The WVDA tests every common flocck for AI before they are moved from their houses, ensuring that sick birds are not trucked past other poultry farms in the region.

Because they typically roam outdoors, backyard flocks are more likely to come into contact with wild birds that serve as reservoirs for AI viruses. Commercial poultry are housed indoors exclusively, which reduces the chance of coming into contact with wild birds or the waterways they frequent.

Biosecurity practices to prevent the introduction or spread of AI are important to both commercial and backyard poultry farms.

Call the WVDA if you think your birds might be sick. Call the Moorefield office at 304-538-2397 during regular business hours. Call 304-558-2214 and leave a message after regular business hours.

Potatoes are on the move

I’m pleased to report to you that things continue to move along on our Potato Processing Initiative at WVDA and the fruits of the labor of many are now available for purchase at various locations across West Virginia for our residents to purchase and enjoy.

Processing and packaging is continuing and will wrap up this month. Sales have been under way for several weeks with food wholesalers, county school systems, grocery stores, markets and retailers among the many who are buying and offering West Virginia grown potatoes for sale. If you haven’t seen them and want to get them, I encourage you to have your favorite store contact us at 304-558-3708 to find out how they can get them.

We will be reporting to you later this winter on the final production and sales numbers but needless to say we are pleased and excited about the progress and look to make next year an even better one as we expand our commercial farm operations.

Another pallet of potatoes - washed, sorted and bagged - is ready for delivery from the WVDA’s Potato Processing Demonstration project at Huttonsville. The initiative is the first step in revitalizing ag industries that once were common in West Virginia and that today could serve to boost the state’s economy using existing, renewable resources.

WV FFA members shine at National Convention

We are very proud of the numerous members of West Virginia’s FFA program that attended the National Convention in late October in Louisville.

And again, many of our FFA participants were recognized and honored with awards for their wonderful accomplishments in Agriculture. I encourage them all to continue to learn about opportunities in Agbusiness and hope they choose to become the entrepreneurs that will drive our state’s economy in the future.

I am continuing to visit our state FFA programs and will be making more visits in the months ahead to promote and assist our next generation of Agricultural leaders.

Agriculture and Conservation Day at the Capitol

On January 20, Agriculture and Conservation will be highlighted at the State Capitol. I hope as many of you as possible can come and let our Legislators know that Agriculture is alive and growing in our state. It will continue to be an economic driver as we return to our roots and grow and process more crops and livestock to feed West Virginians.

A Word of Thanks and Greetings

As 2015 comes to a close, I want to thank the many of you that continue to support Agriculture and our efforts at the WVDA to revitalize and move our industry forward in West Virginia.

Finally, I want to wish you all the Happiest of Holidays, Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year in 2016.
Buffalo FFA recognized by BOE for national convention achievements

The Buffalo High School FFA Club was recognized by the Putnam County Board of Education for their outstanding performance at the FFA National Convention in Louisville.

Commissioner Helmick poses with members of Buffalo High School FFA who were recognized by the Putnam County Board of Education for their outstanding performance at the FFA National Convention in Louisville earlier this year.

Among the highlights of the trip were Kelly Irvine’s national championship in the Agriscience Fair Social Systems competition and Lainey Smith’s participation in the FFA National Band. Smith also auditioned for a speaking role in the convention’s telecast and was featured on national television.

Commissioner of Agriculture Walt Helmick joined BOE President Butch Legg in congratulating the students.

“Buffalo has done an incredible job with its ag program. I know the faculty, the advisors and the students have put in a tremendous amount of hard work that has now been rewarded and they can be very proud of that,” said Commissioner Helmick.

“Congratulations are in order for the other West Virginia schools that attended and competed at the national convention this year. These programs provide such a tremendous educational opportunity for our youth. From ag sciences to public speaking to leadership skills, there’s few programs that can compare to FFA,” Commissioner Helmick added.

Buffalo FFA Advisor Danielle Grant said that the Putnam BOE paid 80 percent of the cost of the trip to the conference. Fund-raising made up the other 20 percent. She also noted that students must finish first at state-level competitions to enter national contests and thanked parents and the school system for their support of the four-year-old FFA program, which was one of seven in West Virginia to earn silver medal ratings for chapter management.

Tygarts Valley FFA Fundraiser Pays for Members’ National Convention Trip

Tygarts Valley FFA members pose with bagged potatoes donated by WVDA to auction at a fundraiser held Oct. 17. The potatoes were auctioned at the event, along with other items donated by the public or made by the students.

The potatoes came from the potato processing demonstration project at WVDA’s Huttonsville Farm, located near Tygarts Valley High School. Club members attended a field day at the farm earlier this fall.

According to FFA Club Advisor Lee Wright, the event raised $3,300 – enough to pay for the club’s 10 officers to attend the national convention in Louisville this year.

“The kids didn’t have to pay for anything other than lunches and breakfasts,” Wright said.

The fund-raiser also paid FFA membership dues for the entire year. A poinsettia sale is right around the corner. Wright said he’d like to have enough money to attend the national convention again next year, as well as to take a group to the Pennsylvania State Farm Show.

Pictured at left is WVDA employee Jerry Nelson.

MEAD, continued from page 1

The Tulip Poplar, Basswood and West Virginia Wildflower meads are the basis of the business. In the past couple of years they’ve added new flavors as well, meads that contain fruit and spices. There’s the Black Cherry Red Honey Wine with a hint of green tea to finish with a nutty flavor.

Blush Honey Wine also uses the fruit but in a subtler way. The Café Monteverde Methylyn features Costa Rica coffee.

Tom and Ruthann are most proud of two meads with a unique twist. One of those is Ruthie’s Rhodomel Methylyn, made with tea rose petals from a bush outside the couple’s century-old home.

“I think I’ve seen one other business in the country that’s doing a rhodomel but it’s with rose hip and not rose petals. As far as a rose petal rhodomel, I think we’re the only ones making that,” stresses Tom.

The other special mead is Morat Melomel. It’s an old Irish/Welsh idea where honey is fermented with mulberries. As far as Tom knows, there’s no one else in the U.S. commercially producing that honey wine.

“We’ve always been fond of old and forgotten things. Bringing them into modern view is something we enjoy and are proud of,” he says.

Unlike wine which can take years to age, mead takes about six months. Tom stresses they measure sugar levels carefully and wait on the taste to mature before it’s ever bottled.

From harvesting the honey and measuring out the ingredients to racking the honey wine and then bottling and labeling it, they do it all.

This year the couple made 3,000 gallons of mead. They hope to increase that to 5,000 gallons in 2016.

“We’d like to get this building up to 8,000 to 10,000 gallons a year. Beyond that is a second phase. We’ll take a breather at that point and think about expanding,” according to Tom.

Currently Mountain Dragon Mazery is open Thursdays for tours and tastings. Visitors can sample the wines and purchase them by the bottle.

Tom says they’ve been very lucky because they haven’t had to do a lot of advertising. Tamarack came calling early on, asking if the artisan retail center could feature Mountain Dragon Mazery honey wine. It went flying off the shelves. Now you can find their mead in Shop-N-Save, Kroger, and some BFS stores around the state.

Tom and Ruthann say businesses is buzzing. They hope to keep spreading the word about mead and gaining new fans.

Mountain Dragon Mazery is located at 1516 Morgantown Ave. in Fairmont. You can reach the business at www.mountaindragonomazery.com, on Facebook, or by calling 304-534-8716.

Garden Calendar

December

Source: WVU Extension Service

2015 Garden Calendar

Dec. 1 …….. Turn compost. Protect shrubs from harsh weather.

Dec. 2 …….. Mulch hybrid roses.

Dec. 5 …….. Select cut Christmas tree with flexible needles.

Dec. 10 …….. Begin harvest of high tunnel carrots and lettuce.

Dec. 11 …….. Buy live Christmas tree.

Dec. 14 …….. Turn compost.

Dec. 28 …….. Plant live Christmas tree.

http://anr.ext.wvu.edu/garden_calendar
Delicious Holiday Dishes!

This month’s festive dishes come from the White Grass Cafe’s (Davis, WV) newest cookbook, White Grass Flavor. Specializing in wholesome and natural foods, the cookbook contains delicious, healthy and easy-to-prepare recipes for dishes such as Veggie Pot Stickers, Burgundy Beef Tenderloin, Trout in Champagne Cream Sauce and Blueberry Crisp, to name just a few! If you are interested in ordering the cookbook, visit [http://www.whitegrass.com/cafe.html](http://www.whitegrass.com/cafe.html) or [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).

### White Grass Bruschetta

Layered Mediterranean Dip

This is a twist on the well known Seven Layer Mexican Dip. Make it easy on yourself by using quality store bought hummus. Serve with warm pita or crusty bread.

1 loaf ciabatta or other crusty Italian bread
1 cup chopped calamata olives
1 cup chopped artichoke hearts
1 cup fresh parsley, chopped
1 cup red onion, chopped
1 tbsp. minced garlic

**Olive Tapenade**
1 cup calamata olives, pitted
1 tsp. balsamic vinegar
1 tsp. olive oil
2 tsp. minced garlic

**Tomato Mixture**
2 medium ripe tomatoes, chopped
1 ripe yellow tomato, chopped
1/2 cup sweet onion, finely chopped
1/2 cup red bell pepper, finely chopped
1/4 cup green bell pepper, finely chopped

Blend all ingredients in a food processor until smooth. Can be made a day ahead and refrigerated.

To serve cold: Just before serving, spread each toast with about one teaspoon of the olive tapenade and a spoonful of tomato mixture.

To serve warm: Spread toast with tapenade and tomato mixture then sprinkle with parmesan cheese and heat at 425 until cheese melts. Serve immediately.

### Burgundy Beef Tenderloin

This is a special occasion kind of entree and is perfectly complimented with flavored mashed potatoes and roasted asparagus.

5 pound beef tenderloin (it is worth it to buy a trimmed piece of meat, or ask your butcher to trim it for you)

**Marinade**
1 1/2 tsp. black pepper
2 tsp. salt
1 1/2 tsp. olive oil
3 Tbs. balsamic vinegar

Make marinade by whisking red wine, vinegar, rosemary, salt, pepper and olive oil. Place beef in a tight fitting pan. Prick meat all over with a fork and pour on marinade. Turn to coat. Cover with foil. Refrigerate for 2 to 24 hours. Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Roast meat 25-45 minutes to your preferred doneness. Use an instant read thermometer for temperature reading.

- 120 degrees for rare
- 125 to 130 for medium rare
- 135 to 140 for medium

Remember the temperature will rise 5-10 degrees after you remove it from the oven. Transfer to a platter and let sit 10-20 minutes before carving.

Serve meat with sauteing mushrooms with garlic and butter in a sauce pan about 3-4 minutes. Then add juices from the meat pan. Cook 15-20 minutes on low heat.

Slice beef into 1/2 inch thick slices and arrange on a rimmed platter. Pour sauce over beef just before serving. Makes 10-12 servings.

### Canaan Valley Fog

Canaan Valley Fog

Serves 12

2 cups coffee liquor
1/2 cup vodka
5 cups strong black coffee, cooled
3 pints soft coffee ice cream
Top with canned whipped cream if you desire.

The fog in Canaan Valley is as thick as this delicious desert drink. It is sooo good.

Mix all ingredients in a punch bowl and serve immediately.

### Chocolate Peppermint Cake

This cake is very moist and very easy. It can be made a day ahead and makes 12 to 18 servings - so it’s a perfect party cake.

**Cake:**
4 eggs
1 cup sugar
1 16-ounce can chocolate syrup
1 stick butter, melted
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1/2 tsp. salt

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

**Icing:**
1 stick butter
1 cup sugar
1/2 cup milk
1 cup chocolate chips (5 oz.)
1 tsp. vanilla
1 tsp. peppermint extract.

Place beef in a tight fitting pan. Prick meat all over with a fork and pour on marinade. Turn to coat. Cover with foil. Refrigerate for 2 to 24 hours. Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Roast meat 25-45 minutes to your preferred doneness. Use an instant read thermometer for temperature reading.

- 120 degrees for rare
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Slice beef into 1/2 inch thick slices and arrange on a rimmed platter. Pour sauce over beef just before serving. Makes 10-12 servings.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

**Cake:** Mix eggs, sugar, syrup and butter in a mixing bowl. Add flour, salt, powder and vanilla, blend well. Pour into a 9 x 13 inch greased baking pan. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes. While cake is baking, make icing.

**Icing:** In a saucepan, heat butter and sugar over medium heat. Bring to a low boil and stir for 2 minutes - don’t over cook!

Remove from heat and add chocolate chips, vanilla and mint. Stir until melted. Pour over cake while both are still hot. Store at room temperature.
Cabell County tobacco farmer one of few left in state

Halleck “Cappy” Adkins is a man of few words. He prefers the quiet life on his Cabell County farm where his beef cattle offer up an occasional “moo.”

His main source of income used to be tobacco which he’s been growing for as long as he can remember.

“Dad started me out when I was a little-bitty thing,” he remembers looking out over a narrow stretch of field that parallels a set of railroad tracks. His farm is located in Salt Rock beside the banks of the Guyadotte River.

Other than four years in the Air Force, Cappy’s been raising tobacco all his life. At the age of 74, he’s still at it. However, he’s one of the last of a dying breed.

Hundreds of farmers raised and sold tobacco in the state’s western counties in the early 20th century. Companies like Brown and Williamson and Liggett and Myers would purchase as much tobacco as farmers could grow. It brought in more than $14-million a year to the state, big bucks a century ago.

However, those numbers have dwindled significantly. Cappy and a few neighbors keep plugging away but on a much smaller scale. He harvested just 2 acres of tobacco this summer.

That’s down from about 40 acres two decades ago.

“Way back there were thousands of growers. Everybody grew their own tobacco. That was before the buyout,” explains Cappy.

The Tobacco Transition Payment Program, or tobacco buyout, happened in 2004. It ended the Depression-era tobacco quotas.

The Tobacco Transition Payment Program, however, was a mixed blessing. Tobacco growers were paid extra to get out of the tobacco business. It allowed them to diversify and grow other crops. However, it also contributed to the decline of tobacco farming.

In 2005, the Tobacco Buyout Program ended with a total of $1.1 billion distributed to farmers.

Despite the decline, there are still a few tobacco growers left in the state. Cappy is one of the few.

Cappy stresses even with all the advances in processing tobacco there’s still a lot you have to do by hand.

“You have to have a work ethic. You can’t just sit on the porch,” he stresses. “You can’t hardly find help anymore. The mailbox is too handy.”

For now, Cappy plans to continue planting a small plot of tobacco. However, the future of the crop here in West Virginia, he says, is a lot like blowing smoke into the wind.
For a 2015 Fall Feeder Cattle Sale Schedule, contact the WV Cattlemen’s Association at 472-4020 or visit agriculture.wv.gov/
Horse Sales

Pygmy bucking, black/white, $100. Paul Elliott, 3397 Gillespie Rd Run, Hintonville, 26203; 243-4208.


Goat Sales

Pygmy bucking, black/white, $100. Paul Elliott, 3397 Gillespie Rd Run, Hintonville, 26203; 243-4208.

Hog Sales

Pure/Berkshire 2-yr. boar, good dis., not reg., proven, approx. 550 lbs., located in Summers Co., $60. Laura Brenner, P.O. Box 60, Sandstone, 25585; 827-4702.
Still looking for that perfect Christmas tree?  
The WVDA has a list of WV-grown cut and carry trees!  
SHOP LOCAL!  
http://bit.ly/1yL2lce

Western saddle, 15", $300. Tamara Hagey, 3360 Goodville Fork Rd., Palestine, 26710; 275-0042.
Hay, 15", 4x4, round bales, barn kept, $40/bale. Phil Haller, 29 Proudfoot Rd., Philippi, 26616; 782-2707.
Hay, 4x4, round bales, barn kept, $35/bale, del. avail. Ricky Haller, 4312 Arnolds Run Rd., Philippi, 26616; 782-4964.

For horse shows, please fill out the listing form and return it by February 10, 2016. Any entries received after the deadline will not appear in the appropriate issue of the Market Bulletin.

**2016 WV Equine Events Calendar**

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture publishes a statewide Equine Events Calendar during the show season. To list your club or organization’s event(s), please fill out the listing form and return it by February 10, 2016. Any entries received after the deadline will not appear in the appropriate issue of the Market Bulletin.

The WVDA has a list of WV-grown cut and carry trees!