



# PROVIDING PROTEIN, ENRICHING LIVES

## WHITE PAPER

November, 2017

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## PRODUCING NUTRITIOUS PROTEIN . . .

Poultry is recognized as a nutritious, low-fat source of quality protein. Protein is essential to every diet and especially important for child development. Poultry is an important protein source that is featured in the cuisine of almost every culture. In the United States, government dietary standards recommend protein that is low in saturated fat, such as poultry. A 100-gram (3.5 ounce) serving of skinless chicken, which supplies 31 grams of protein, contains less than 4 grams of total fat and only 1 gram of saturated fat. Poultry also contains the nine essential amino acids necessary for healthy physical and cognitive development, is low in sodium, and also an excellent source of Vitamin B3 (niacin, which promotes a healthy metabolism), B6 (which is important to immune function and blood sugar maintenance), B7 (biotin, which aids cell growth), and B12 (which helps neuron cell and red blood cell maintenance).



## . . . WITH MORE OPTIONS FOR HEALTH NUTRITION THAN AT ANY TIME IN THE PAST

Whether consumers prefer fresh poultry or the convenience of healthy prepared products, poultry producers are providing more options than ever. These options include fresh and frozen, fully cooked or raw products for supermarkets, fine and casual dining and quick service restaurants and for use in soups and other prepared foods.



## . . . AVAILABLE TO CONSUMERS OF ALL INCOME LEVELS.

Only with the advent of integrated farming and processing in the 20th Century has poultry become widely available at all times of the year. In 1900, households in the United States spent approximately 43 percent of their income on food, even though half of the population of the country (including children) worked in agriculture. Poultry was not an everyday meal but was reserved for special occasions or Sunday dinner. Today the average family spends about 6.6 percent of household income on food according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. No agricultural enterprise represents the increased scale and efficiencies that have been achieved through advanced methodologies better than the poultry industry. Vertical integration of the industry has resulted in fewer man hours to produce larger flock sizes, a reduction in feed requirements, improved animal health programs and a much smaller environmental impact. Moreover, fresh locally grown and processed poultry is more available than ever. Because of these advances in technology and efficiency, significant household income and work effort once expended on food have been liberated and can now be allocated to education, improved healthcare and other advances in health and welfare that have positively impacted the lives of consumers of all income levels.

# THE POULTRY INDUSTRY PROVIDES OUR WORKFORCE WITH A STABLE PATH TO ECONOMIC SECURITY INCLUDING . . .

## . . . COMPETITIVE WAGES AND BENEFITS

While critics of the industry may allege we offer “poverty level” wages, the truth is our industry offers wages that are competitive, are often the highest paying entry level jobs in the communities in which they operate and offer competitive and affordable medical, dental and vision benefits as well as retirement savings plans. A review of 2015 Bureau of Labor Statistics data compared the median wage (50 percent of wage earners above and 50 percent below) for poultry and meat processing workers in the nonmetropolitan areas of four major poultry producing states. Poultry median wages were 88.5 percent of the median wage for ALL occupations and starting salaries are well above the federal minimum wage.

Even so, to remain competitive many industry members have implemented significant increases in starting pay in order to attract talent and provide a better living for our workforce. For example, one company recently announced an increase in starting pay to at least \$11 per hour and now offers average pay of \$12 per hour, with both seniority and production-based incentives, to employees who have been working for a year or more. Positions requiring more skills, such as live hangers, can make up to \$14 - \$15 or higher. Skilled hourly positions, such as maintenance and refrigeration mechanics, can go as high as \$30 per hour depending on their skill level. All of these positions offer insurance, retirement and vacation.



## . . . STABLE AND STEADY EMPLOYMENT

In an economic environment that has often been characterized by the erosion of entry level and blue-collar jobs, the poultry industry has consistently provided stable employment that has featured steady growth rather than the uncertainty and dislocation that has affected many other industries. Many of the jobs that have been created are located in rural communities with limited other opportunities for steady employment. Such opportunities for stable employment provide a clear path for any motivated worker, including the long-term unemployed, to achieve the pride and self-satisfaction of economic security and independence.

***Rotavious started working as a general laborer in 2008 and is now a salaried supervisor. He states, “The poultry industry has given me the opportunity to grow, recognizing my talent. I love my job and look forward to coming to work every day. I am now able to help others be successful in their careers.”***

## ... OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT

Poultry industry members have historically offered opportunities for advancement that surpass those found in other industries. Member companies generally fill entry-level management jobs by promoting from within. It is not uncommon to find within the management ranks of members of our industry individuals, from diverse backgrounds, who have taken advantage of training opportunities to progress to management level positions. Training is provided in multiple languages to accommodate the needs of our diverse workforce. Few other industries offer comparable opportunities for advancement.



***Several poultry companies feature a "returning citizens" program which hires people as they leave the prison system to give them a second chance to learn how to be productive employees and citizens. Robert was hired after serving time for a violent crime and has become a vital employee team member. His supervisor commends him for constantly observing his department to ensure that all equipment is running smoothly and providing extraordinary contributions by identifying problems and suggesting solutions.***

***Tina started working with a poultry company 29 years ago in order to work for lunch money for high school. Almost 30 years later, after taking classes funded by her employer, she is the human resources manager and paralegal. She handles the insurance negotiations for the entire company, along with safety-medical and management trainee programs.***

## ... FOR A DIVERSE WORKFORCE

Our industry is proud of the diversity represented among our workforce and our management ranks. Our industry works within the communities in which we operate to promote the well-being and education of our immigrant workforce. We provide training and other communications in multiple languages as appropriate and offer bilingual management and human resources representatives to accommodate the needs of our immigrant workers.

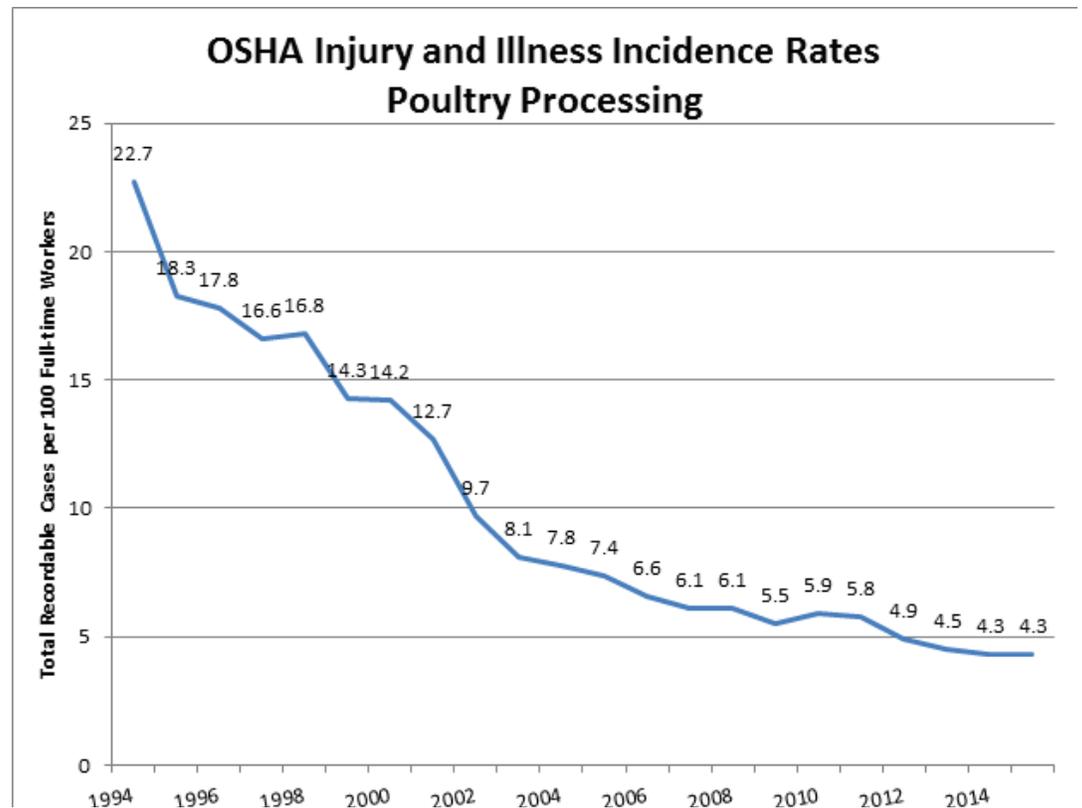


***Micaela, a second generation American, worked night shift in a packaging facility making it difficult to spend time with her family. She relates her story: "I will never forget the morning I woke up, went outside to get the newspaper and saw the ad for a human resources assistant in a poultry plant. The career has given me the opportunity to grow both personally and financially. Spending quality time with family is very important to me. In my previous job, I missed many gatherings and activities on the weekends. I am now able to go home every afternoon and spend time with my husband and 3-year old son. I am very grateful for the opportunity this company has given me to be someone in life and reach my goals. My father always told me to work hard for what I want and to never give up. I have been working in the poultry industry for about five years now, and I love what I do. I am now a manager trainee and my dream is to one day become a manager in the Human Resources field!"***

*Benita began working in the packing department in a poultry plant in 1999 to establish a steady job history in order to buy a house for her family. She needed to move her seven children from a neighborhood that was a poor environment to raise them. With her goal in mind she advanced from the packing line to become an orientation trainer and an HR clerk before assuming her current position as benefits coordinator. She says, "Working in a poultry plant has helped me in getting my own house and putting four of my daughters through college. Also the poultry industry has given me the necessary training, such as my computer skills, seminars and all the necessary tools that I've needed to advance and do my job efficiently. I feel blessed to have found such an industry that cares for their employees!"*

## ... PROVIDING SAFE EMPLOYMENT

Because it is our goal to prevent every injury, providing a safe workplace will always be a process of continuous improvement. Within poultry processing plants, the occurrence of occupational injury and illness has decreased by more than 80 percent in the last 20 years according to the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics. The poultry industry's current injury and illness rate of 4.3 per 100 full-time workers is equivalent to all manufacturing jobs and has been decreasing at a much faster rate than manufacturing as a whole.



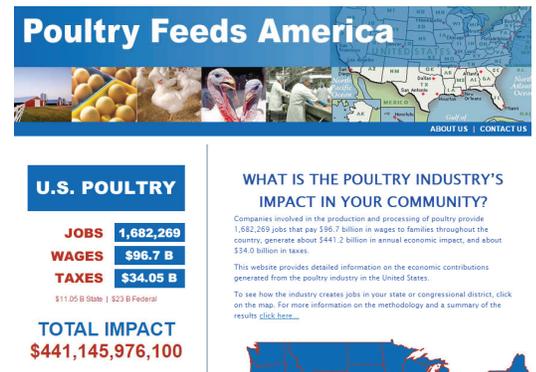
The industry has worked with both the government and universities to develop a safer workplace. These efforts have included adjustable work stations, ergonomically correct knives, and efforts to replace manual repetitive tasks with automated technologies. The industry has also worked with equipment manufacturers to improve machine guarding, as well as personal protective clothing and equipment. The industry has developed a knife and scissor sharpening program which makes jobs easier, as well as exercise and

conditioning programs to help employees with the physical demands of their jobs. The poultry industry worked with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to develop guidance for the prevention of musculoskeletal injuries in poultry processing.

The industry also provides health and safety training in multiple languages as needed, and all industry members participate in safety committees consisting of both salaried and hourly employees to address safety hazards in the workplace. All industry members employ safety professionals whose primary responsibility is maintaining the highest level of compliance with all applicable standards.

## A POSITIVE ECONOMIC IMPACT . . .

A 2016 study by John Dunham and Associates reveals that the poultry industry contributes \$441 billion in total to the U.S. economy. The industry directly creates 497,700 jobs and well over 1 million additional jobs indirectly while contributing approximately \$34 billion in federal, state and local tax revenue. Poultry processing and related jobs generate approximately \$97.6 billion in wages for working families.



## SERVING OUR COMMUNITIES . . .

Industry members make positive impacts in their communities and also provide collaborative opportunities for employees and managers to serve local communities. For example, one company and its employees and other volunteers annually conduct the "Thanksgiving for Thousands" event through which Thanksgiving meals are provided for more than 40,000 residents in communities where their facilities are located. There are numerous similar examples of community outreach programs throughout the poultry industry including disaster relief food donations, community beautification projects, support for such organizations as United Way, Relay for Life, American Cancer Society, Boys and Girls Clubs, Junior Achievement, Scouting, and FFA and 4-H and Habitat for Humanity. In addition to medical clinics within the plants some firms offer health and wellness centers to provide care for employees' families as well.



## CONCLUSION....

The poultry industry is an important participant in the food supply system providing a broad source of healthy protein options which are available and affordable to consumers on all levels. It is also important to today's economy as it offers well paying, stable jobs and good benefits providing economic security for its workforce and providing unlimited opportunities for advancement. The radically diverse industry creates a positive economic impact and also serves its' local communities in many ways.