THE NATIONAL POULTRY INFObASE (NPI) GLOBAL INFORMATION ACCESS

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Primary Audience: Poultry Producers, Extension Specialists, Researchers, Suppliers

SUMMARY

The National Poultry Infobase (NPI) will provide reliable, readily accessible information to aid the user to make informed decisions. The NPI is intended to be a repository of the most current and applicable literature on numerous subjects. It is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain assistance and reliable and easily understood information on poultry topics.

The NPI project has been in the planning stage since 1996, and editorial committees have been formed. The editorial committees in each of more than 20 subject areas will review literature for the most comprehensive, up-to-date materials. Committees comprise expert volunteers in several specialty areas.

The NPI will be a product of The ADDS (Agricultural Databases for Decision Support) Center, Inc., a non-profit organization that has created popular Dairy, Pig, Beef, and Sheep Infobases. The NPI will provide full-text, expert-selected articles providing information ranging from the basic through the latest technology and research findings. The NPI will be available on the World Wide Web (Web) and on Web-enabled CD-ROM disks (CD).

A demonstration NPI CD was used to show the powerful information retrieval capabilities of the NPI. The plan for funding the completion and maintenance of the NPI, based on the previous ADDS Infobases, was presented.

Key words: Full-text articles, Poultry Infobase, World Wide Web, Extension


INTRODUCTION

Historically, poultry information has been accessed from published materials by correspondence, telephone, or fax with university personnel or consultants. Libraries offer computerized searches that often result in several hundred “hits” when only a handful are related to the information being sought. Internet searches will usually result in thousands of “hits” with most being irrelevant and without scientific merit.

The NPI will not displace current methods of acquiring data but will provide current data rapidly, without need for sifting through voluminous material to find the most applicable information. Excellent web pages exist, but they re-
quire much time and effort to create and keep up-to-date. Poultry experts from around the world will select the most appropriate, current, published articles from a variety of sources for inclusion on the NPI Web page and CD. Almost all of the information on a Web page can be transferred onto a CD, which operates faster than an Internet connection in many cases.

**THE NATIONAL POULTRY INFOBASE**

In 1996, Richard Reynnells circulated a questionnaire to all poultry specialists asking about the usefulness of an NPI product, based on the popular National Dairy Infobase, and what priority they would attach to the product. Poultry specialists overwhelmingly have been in favor of creating the NPI. Since then, many meetings and conference calls were held to create the volunteer editorial committees that will select materials to be included in the NPI. Many discussions also involved funding issues to produce the initial NPI. Sales of CD and Web subscriptions are expected to provide funding for updating the NPI, as has been the case with the Dairy and Pig Infobases.

The NPI will be a Web page created by poultry experts from around the world. The NPI will also be produced on Web-enabled CD for use in areas where reliable, high-speed internet connections are unavailable.

Momentum to develop the NPI has been developing for the past 4 yr. Organizational meetings have been held in conjunction with several national poultry association and trade meetings, and several conference calls have taken place. Editorial leaders and their committees for the NPI subject arrays have volunteered to serve. The volunteers include faculty from all agricultural colleges having a poultry curriculum and many USDA scientists and industry representatives. Most of the volunteers have experience with database development and Web technology and education. The review of materials for the NPI will stimulate and facilitate interaction among leading agricultural scientists. Cooperation, support, and collaboration across the diverse interests within the National Poultry Infobase have been achieved.

The NPI will consist of many subject-based arrays. The initial arrays in the NPI will be manure and waste management, poultry health, general management, feeding and nutrition, genetics, incubation and breeding, animal well-being, buildings and facilities, economics, marketing and business, labor, videos and graphics, farm safety, protection of environment, production of safe food, contracting and grower relations, small-scale poultry production, expansion, education and youth, and processing and products. Additional sub-arrays could be added as needed. A graphic representation of the array may be viewed at http://www.reeusda.gov/adds/poularay.htm

Educational materials including articles from trade and professional journals, meeting handouts, pamphlets, newsletters, mass media, and other sources of information will be placed in each of the arrays. Educational materials will be selected by a committee of university, government, and industry representatives having expertise in each subject array. The editorial leader of each subject array will distribute materials to the committee members, and members will vote on the acceptability of the material. Approved educational materials will be placed into the NPI by ADDS Center personnel.

The NPI will provide reliable, accessible poultry information, support county programs, support state extension programs, assist educational programs, and aid in decision making for a variety of audiences worldwide. The NPI will provide articles in full text, with no editing, based on the recommendation of experts in the field; these articles will be practical and user friendly. The articles will be fully searchable and up-to-date.

The current search engine, Folio 4.2, is flexible and can accommodate documents in multiple formats including Acrobat, text, and Folio. The NPI Web page will be updated monthly, and the CD-ROM will be created on demand.

The NPI will focus on national coordination and leadership throughout the broad agricultural community to assure everyone involved in the poultry system is provided the best knowledge and support possible for long- and short-range planning and for day-to-day decision making.
THE ADDS CENTER

Technical creation and update of the NPI will be done by the ADDS Center, Inc. The ADDS Center is a nonprofit public/private corporation created by educators interested in agricultural databases for decision support. Donations to The ADDS Center are good investments and are tax deductible. The ADDS Center is user controlled and has hired an internet database creation firm to develop and maintain the NPI. Employment of expert web page developers will allow poultry experts to focus on selecting content. Board members and experts are volunteers and are not compensated. The ADDS Center has already created very successful infobases for dairy, pig, beef, and sheep industries. These information databases prove this model is successful for creation and maintenance of infobases for decision support. The ADDS Center created the demonstration NPI CD-ROM featured in this presentation.

Some advantages of the NPI partnering with the ADDS Center include experience in creating infobases for other agricultural commodities and creation of Web-enabled CD-ROM with customized logos. The NPI will also have access to articles in other ADDS Infobases that share common interests, such as nutrient management and animal welfare.

COPYRIGHT ISSUES

The editors of the NPI have received permission to use papers published in the journal **Poultry Science**. We must have authors’ permission to use their articles in the NPI. Most authors will be honored to have their publication selected for inclusion in the NPI, and so we do not anticipate serious problems. In the case of copyrighted web pages, the ADDS Center will attempt to get permission to use whole text; if permission is not given, hot-links will be included on the CD, or the editors may decide to select a different article for which we can have permission.

NEXT STEPS

We must secure your cooperation for partial financial support to complete the NPI. Because ADDS, Inc. is a public/private nonprofit corporation, donations are tax deductible. The initial cost of the NPI is $50,000 to $60,000.

Pledges to date are as follows: Pacific Egg & Poultry Association Foundation ($5,000), National Poultry Waste Management Symposium (NPWMS) Planning Committee ($10,000), Challenge Grant from Pennsylvania State University ($3,000), Challenge Grant from University of Maryland ($3,000), and Degussa-Huls Corporation ($5,000). Pennsylvania State University offered the first challenge grant because the ease of finding educational materials on the NPI would greatly improve the efficiency of poultry specialists, researchers, and agricultural agents.

Flexible arrangements are available for sponsors of the NPI. For example, the NPWMS Planning Committee will have all of their past proceedings included on the NPI Web page and CD. Also each sponsor will receive one CD and Web subscription per $100 donated. The ADDS Center can include customized content (catalogs, etc.) and CD logos.

Based upon its successful Dairy, Pig and Beef InfoBases, the ADDS Center knows it can sustain and update the NPI by marketing a CD for $99.00 and an annual web subscription for $35.00. Distribution of funds is 50% to update the Infobase, 30% for ADDS Center overhead, and 20% for distribution channels. Annual cost to maintain a growing, active infobase is about $35,000.

Partial or complete financial support to complete this project should be recovered through sales. After completion, the NPI can be maintained through CD sales and Web subscriptions at $35/yr.

CONCLUSIONS AND APPLICATIONS

1. Create a world-wide Poultry Infobase that will provide reliable, readily accessible information to aid a variety of customers to make informed decisions.
2. Provide a “living” document that may be used for distance education and specialized training.