

# **POULTRY IMPROVEMENT BOARD**

**March 1988**

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## Summary of Recommendations

The Poultry Improvement Board was established in 1949 and is currently active. The board is part of a national effort begun in 1935 to reduce wide-spread losses being suffered in the poultry industry due to uncontrolled disease. The federal government established the National Poultry Improvement Plan to deal with this problem. The plan, administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, sets voluntary standards that address both prevention and control of disease.

Texas participates in the plan, as do the other 46 poultry producing states, because of the importance of having a national disease control program to protect the industry. The industry is of major significance to the Texas economy. In 1986, the Texas industry was worth \$650 million at the farm level and ranked as the sixth largest agricultural business in Texas. Nationally, the Texas industry ranked seventh in production and gross income.

The Poultry Improvement Board serves as the state's official contact point with the federal government in the administration of the plan. The review of the board indicated no need for the board to continue to exist as a statutory agency. A survey of other states showed that five states participate in the national plan through a private industry association. None of these states have statutorily designated a contact with the USDA. Federal officials indicated that Texas could participate in the plan with an industry association as the state's contact point. The Texas Poultry Federation, the state's major industry association, has indicated that it would assume the responsibility as the state's contact point in the absence of a state board. If, however, the legislature should decide to continue the Poultry Improvement Board, the statute should be changed to clearly indicate that the board's meetings are subject to the posting requirements of the open meetings act.

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### Recommendations

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1. **The Poultry Improvement Board should not be continued in statute. (p. 11)**

The federal government does not require states to have a statutory board such as the Poultry Improvement Board as a state contact point to participate in the federal poultry disease program (the National Poultry Improvement Plan). In the absence of the statutory Poultry Improvement Board the Texas Poultry Federation, the state's

poultry association, can assume the responsibility as the contact point. Therefore, continuation of the Poultry Improvement Board as a state agency is not needed.

# **AGENCY EVALUATION**



## **Background**





## Creation and Powers

The Poultry Improvement Board was established in 1949 and is currently active. The board is part of the national effort begun in 1935 to improve poultry products and reduce poultry disease. The federal government established the National Poultry Improvement Plan to reduce the widespread losses being suffered by the poultry industry due to uncontrolled diseases. Under the plan, the federal government and participating states set national standards aimed at identifying diseased poultry, controlling the spread of the disease, and eventually making the poultry industry disease-free. These efforts are accomplished through testing, vaccinations and maintenance of acceptable sanitation levels.

Members of the poultry industry who participate in the plan and meet the standards are authorized to use logos and designations which signify that their products meet the standards. While participation in the plan is voluntary, products cannot generally be sold without meeting the standards.

All 47 states that have a poultry industry are participants in the plan. Texas is a participant because the poultry industry is a significant part of the Texas economy. The industry was worth \$650 million at the farm level in 1986 which made it the sixth largest sector of the state's agricultural economy. The Texas poultry industry ranked seventh in the nation in 1986 in terms of production and gross income.

Texas' regulatory scheme for the control of poultry disease is carried out by several entities as described in the following exhibit.

### Exhibit 1 Responsibilities for the Regulation of Poultry Disease in Texas

| <u>Entity</u>  | <u>Responsibility</u>  |
|--|--|
| Poultry Improvement Board                            | Serves as contact agency with the USDA to administer the National Poultry Improvement Plan.  |
| Poultry Industry                                     | As plan participants, industry members comply with disease control requirements, test their flocks and vaccinate to prevent disease.   |
| Texas Animal Health Commission                       | Has general authority for control of animal disease, including quarantine power over diseased poultry.                                 |
| Texas A&M University Agricultural Experiment Station | Operates a disease control program for poultry not covered by the national plan (small, backyard-type operations, exhibitions, shows). |

The Poultry Improvement Board is responsible for acting as Texas' representative to work with the USDA in setting the national standards and carrying out the national plan. In this role the board assists the USDA to determine how well the program is working to control poultry diseases in Texas and provides information to the USDA as to the level of plan participation by Texas' industry members. The board also makes suggestions to the USDA as to changes needed to improve the program, sends delegates to the annual National Poultry Improvement Plan convention (to consider plan changes needed), and informs the industry of changes as they occur.

The statute creating the board allows the Texas Poultry Improvement Association to determine the board's size and composition. The association is a private industry association composed of industry representatives concerned primarily with health and disease control. The association is a sub-group of the Texas Poultry Federation, the state's main poultry association. The current board composition is as follows:

- Head of the Poultry Science Department at Texas A&M University (chairman);
- A member of the Poultry Science Department staff representing the research function of the department;
- A member of the Poultry Science Department staff representing the extension function of the department;
- Head of the Department of Veterinary Microbiology and Parasitology at Texas A&M University.
- President of the Texas Poultry Improvement Association;
- Executive Vice-president of the Texas Poultry Improvement Association; and
- Three industry representatives from the TPIA elected by the association's board of directors.

Board members serve on an as-needed basis for a one year term with provisions for reappointment. The board receives no separate state funding and board members' expenses are paid by the organizations they represent.

## **Review of Operations**



## **Focus of Review and Recommendations**

The sunset review of the Poultry Improvement Board was confined to the function assigned to the board: that of representing the interests of the Texas poultry industry in setting voluntary national standards for the control of poultry diseases. The overall regulatory scheme used by the state for controlling poultry diseases was not examined as part of this review and will be dealt with in the review of the Texas Animal Health Commission.

The review analyzed the need for the statute creating the board and also the need for changes which could improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the board should the legislature continue it in statute. The findings of the review are discussed in the following material.

### **The Poultry Improvement Board Does Not Need to be Designated in Statute**

Currently 47 states participate in the voluntary federal program created to develop standards to assure that poultry products are disease free. Participation in the program is critical to a state's poultry industry because a state that does not participate essentially cannot market its poultry products in other states.

The review indicated that Texas needs to have a contact point with the federal government in order to participate in the disease control program; however, the contact point does not need to be a statutory state agency such as the Poultry Improvement Board. A survey of surrounding states and other major poultry producing states indicated that five states use their private poultry associations as the contact point for participation in the national plan. While Indiana provides this designation in statute, Kansas, Ohio, Georgia, and Mississippi do not. Interviews with the USDA confirm that private associations can serve as the contact point.

In Texas, the state's poultry association also essentially controls the state's participation in the plan. While the Poultry Improvement Board is the official contact by statute, the Texas Poultry Improvement Association is responsible for determining the composition of the board and the appointment of its members. The Texas Poultry Improvement Association is a part of the state's main poultry association, the Texas Poultry Federation. In the absence of a statutory designation, the Texas Poultry Federation would either continue the present system of electing a board to act as Texas' contact or assume the responsibility itself. In either case Texas would continue to have a contact with the federal government so that it could continue to participate in the national plan.

The Poultry Improvement Board should not be continued in statute.

Texas can achieve the purpose for which the board was created without a statutory authorization. The state's poultry industry will continue to be represented in the development of national industry standards through the private poultry association. Implementation of the recommendation would not result in either loss of funds to the state or additional expenditures by the state.