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**From:** Mark Jenner, PhD [mailto:mjenner@biomassrules.com]

**Sent:** Thursday, December 31, 2009 10:56 AM

**To:** ATR-Agricultural Workshops

**Subject:** Letter of support

Please accept this letter of support for your work on contract poultry growing issues. I am currently a biomass energy consultant, but spent nine years working with contract grower issues.

Mark

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Manure is **not** a four-letter word

(submitted electronically to: [agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov](mailto:agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov))

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December 31, 2009

The Honorable Eric Holder  
Attorney General  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Attorney General Holder and Secretary Vilsack:

I wanted to follow-up briefly to a coalition letter that included the Alabama Contract Poultry Growers Association, State Farmers Union Groups, RAFI-USA, and others with comments for the USDA/DOJ workshop on poultry.

For nine years I served as an economist on staff with the American Farm Bureau Federation. I walked into the contract poultry grower issues as an economist fully trained in commodity production agriculture just about the time USDA-GIPSA issued an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on poultry contracts in 1997. I worked within the Farm Bureau network to conduct three national Farm Bureau contract grower issues conferences (1997, 1998, and 1999). The initial goal of these meetings was to collect information with which to make informed comments to USDA-GIPSA.

What we learned in addition was that the contract poultry growing issues were far more complex than any single solution could provide. We continued to collect information beyond the initial 1997 request for comments and much of what we learned was published in *Feedstuffs* (Vol. 70, No. 11, March 16, 1998) in an article entitled, "Improved grower/integrator relations would enhance the poultry industry."

In addition, to the three conferences above, AFBF held another national poultry growers issue conference in 2001. In 2001, I began writing one and two page analyses on grower performance, ranking, and capital investments. The four most significant papers were written in 2002 which were entitled:

- "Production Contract Pay: 'New Math' for Contract Growers".* #10. October 21, 2002
- "Does Flock Performance Rank = Grower Performance Rank?"* #9. April 22, 2002
- "Grower Cost of Operating a Broiler House Below Capacity."* #8. April 9, 2002
- "Understanding the Lender's Share of Grower Contract Pay."* #7. January 3, 2002

The contract poultry grower issues are some of the least understood issues in agriculture. I support the suggestions made in the coalition about the 4 areas that the workshop on poultry should focus on (DOJ/USDA poultry enforcement, lack of regional competition, and tacit collusion between companies, ranking system, capital investment requirements).

I can be available to share what I have learned while working with the grower issues at the USDA/DOJ workshop on poultry in Normal, AL, on May 21, 2010.

Please note also that my street address has just recently changed from what was submitted in other letters. The above address is the best. The phone number and email address have not changed.

Respectfully,

Mark Jenner, PhD  
Owner/Chief Analyst,  
Biomass Rules, LLC