

USDA Celebrates the Opening of its New Poultry Research Facility in Georgia

Contact: Jessica Ryan

Email: Jessica.Ryan@usda.gov

ATHENS, GEORGIA, October 4, 2022 — The USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS), [Southeast Poultry Research Laboratory](#), opened its new research facility during a dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony today at the [U.S. National Poultry Research Center](#).

The new research facility will increase the Southeast Poultry Research Laboratory staff's capabilities to respond to highly pathogenic avian influenza outbreaks as they provide research information for eradication and control, as well as data for control of Newcastle disease, reoviruses, infectious bursal disease, Marek's disease, and other exotic and emerging viruses of poultry and other birds.

Key leaders including USDA's Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics and USDA's Chief Scientist, Dr. Chavonda Jacobs-Young, spoke about the importance of this kind of infrastructure investment in poultry research during the ceremony.



A Southeast Poultry Research Laboratory post doctoral fellow examines tissue culture in the high biocontainment laboratory. (Photo by Jerry Heitschmidt, ARS).

"This modernized facility will serve as the largest poultry research complex in the United States, housing the largest number of researchers and staff dedicated to preventing, discovering, and solving poultry health problems," said Under Secretary Jacobs-Young.

The Southeast Poultry Research Laboratory is a key part of the U.S. National Poultry Research Center and a crucial asset to addressing poultry viral diseases at the state, national, and international levels.

The laboratory has been at the forefront of developing the molecular test used in the United States and globally to diagnose avian influenza and Newcastle disease, developing vaccines for emergency use and commercial application, tracking the virus movement and spread, and understanding how to break the transmission cycle.



The Southeast Poultry Research Laboratory features a high biocontainment laboratory for safe research on exotic viruses of poultry. (Photo provided by the M. A. Mortenson Company)

"When pathogens and diseases threaten the health of poultry, animal health experts in government and industry know that Southeast Poultry Research Laboratory researchers have the knowledge and expertise to quickly find answers and develop solutions," said Dr. Simon Liu, acting ARS administrator.

The ceremony also highlighted the state and local community's support for poultry research.

Georgia's Commissioner of Agriculture Gary Black gave the invocation. U.S. Reps. Sanford Bishop, Jr., Andrew Clyde, Jody Hice, Mayor Kelly Girtz of

Athens-Clarke County, and Mike Giles of the Georgia Poultry Federation also provided remarks during the ceremony.

The [Agricultural Research Service](#) is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's chief scientific in-house research agency. Daily, ARS focuses on solutions to agricultural problems affecting America. Each dollar invested in U.S. agricultural research results in \$20 of economic impact.