



Bob Ratliff

MSU Opens New Poultry Research, Teaching Lab

By Bob Ratliff

Teaching and research capabilities in Mississippi State University's Poultry Science Department have been expanded with the opening of a new poultry processing laboratory.

The facility is a scaled-back version of what students will find when they begin working in the poultry industry, said research coordinator Donnie Zumwalt.

"The laboratory contains the same type of equipment that industry is using and some they will use in the future," he said. "It will give our students real-world experience while they are on campus."

The addition of the laboratory also expands the capabilities of MSU's poultry science program.

"Having a facility that mirrors an industry processing plant will allow us to generate accurate yield data to follow up our applied research," Zumwalt said. "That type of data is valuable for the industry and hard to obtain without this type of facility."

The laboratory contains state-of-the-art poultry processing equipment valued at almost \$2 million. Baader Johnson, a food processing machinery manufacturer based in Kansas City, Kan., and D & F Equipment Sales of Crossville, Ala., donated and installed equipment.

"Students at MSU are the future leaders in the poultry industry, and they will certainly benefit from exposure to state-of-the-art, modern processing equipment and processes. As an alumnus of MSU, I'm very proud that I could be a part of making this happen," said Doug Morgan, Baader Johnson's western division manager.

MSU averages about 40 poultry science majors each semester. Following graduation they enter all phases of the poultry industry, including processing.

"This university significantly impacts the poultry industry, and this partnership is good for all of us," said Mark Gidley, sales and marketing representative with D & F.

Doug Morgan, left, and Mark Gidley inspect equipment their companies installed at the MSU poultry-processing lab.