

Martz's Game Farm Virtual Tour and the Value of the NPIP



Presented By: Mike Martz,
Martz's Game Farm F.L.P., General Partner
Martz's Gap View Hunting Preserve, Inc., President
North American Gamebird Association, President

About Martz's Game Farm

- ← Established 1955 by Harold Martz.
- ← 3rd Generation business with the goal of becoming 4th generation God-willing.
- ← Raises approximately 200,000 mature pheasants, 35,000 chukar partridge, 12,000 Hungarian partridge, and 15,000 Pure French Redleg partridge. The majority of the gamebirds are delivered into the Mid-Atlantic states as well as New England.
- ← Also has a sister company – Martz's Gap View Hunting Preserve, Inc. Established in 1957 and operates a 1,300 acre hunt club. The club uses approximately 20,000 pheasants and 5,000 partridges per season.
- ← Located in the rolling hills of Central Pennsylvania.
- ← Harold Martz got into the business with help from his Uncle Jake Phillips who established Mahantongo Game Farm in the 1930s.

Hatchery – Trayed Eggs



Hatchery – Pheasant Chicks



Hatchery – I-14 Natureform Incubators



Breeder Pens – Hungarian Partridge



Breeder Pens – Chukars



Brooder Barns – Red Barn - 1966



Brooder Barns – Hup Barn - 2023



Brooder Barns – Zartman Barn - 1984



Brooder Barns – Don Martz Barn - 1952



Brooder Barns – Partridge-Specific



Brooder Barns – Partridge-Specific



Brooder Barn Process – Brooding Pheasant Chicks



Brooder Barn Process – 5 Week-Old Pheasants



Brooder Barn Process - Specing



Brooder Barn Process – Moving to Flight Pens



Brooder Barn Process – Moving Out



Flight Pen Process - Cultivating



Flight Pen Process - Planting



Flight Pen Process – Flight Pen Cover



Flight Pen Process – Dumping 6 Week-Old Pheasants



Flight Pen Process – Easy Access to Feed and Water



Flight Pen Process – Just Moved



Flight Pen Process – Chasing Wing



Flight Pen Process – 15 Week-Old Pheasant



Flight Pen Process – 17 Week-Old Pheasant



Catch and Delivery - Catching



Catch and Delivery – Cutting Specs



Catch and Delivery – Catching Lean-To



Catch and Delivery – Catching Lean-To



Catch and Delivery – Part of Fleet



NPIP Biosecurity Background

- ← I will be honest. Prior to 2014-2015 we were much less mindful on biosecurity. We kept separate boot covers for brooder barns and were careful with footwear if there was an issue in a flight pen. We always tended our younger birds first and our older birds last in the buildings. However, the philosophy was "once you get the birds outside there should be very few issues."
- ← Today that mindset has taken a 180-degree turn.
- ← Dr. Pendleton from The Penn State University was a close confidant of mine regarding game bird disease management. Her philosophy that she drilled into me was that 95% of disease that is transmitted via fomites from footwear. Therefore, our biosecurity plan focuses heavy on footwear in addition to other NPIP regulations.
- ← We do have an approved 14-point biosecurity plan that was developed in 2015. Since that time we have amended many areas of our biosecurity plan to increase biosecurity.
- ← Unfortunately we were infected with HPAI in December of 2023. Through genome-sequencing, it was established that the transmission was consistent with a wild bird introduction in our area. Given the amount of red-tailed hawks that frequented the flight pen that was infected, the fact that there were four dead screech-owls found within one air mile of air operation preceding our infection, and our employees strict adherence to all biosecurity principles, I am confident that our infection was likely due to a wild bird that defecated into our flight pen.

HPAI in domestic poultry (as of July 12, 2024)



658 Backyard flocks



506 Commercial flocks

Gamebird
specific



29 Commercial flocks



48 States
Except HI & LA



99.1 million birds affected



11 States



949,520 birds affected



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*Notation – All Information from this slide and the next were obtained by Dr. Abby Schuft (University of Minnesota) from data provided by the USDA.

Avian Influenza on Upland Gamebird Farms

- Gamebird industry 3% of avian industry
 - less information on transmission risks
- Rely on:
 - Knowledge from SUGS risk assessments
 - Biosecurity plan
 - Peers, neighbors, business partners, suppliers and NAGA



Credit to the NPIP

- ← I credit the NPIP for the following regarding our HPAI occurrence:
 - ← We had a depopulation plan in place and have discussed extensively with employees since early 2022 as to our action plan if we were to ever contract HPAI.
 - ← We had an excellent team from the USDA, PDA, staff, volunteers, local fire company, excavators, and carbon source to allow the devastating process to go as smoothly as possible.
 - ← There was no spread to any other pens (we have 117 flight pens and 11 brooding facilities) or any of our off-site premises.
 - ← There was no spread to any neighboring farms.
 - ← We were fortunate to not have to lay any employees off in the aftermath.
 - ← We were able to fully-source game birds for our customers via other NPIP-approved growers as well as our off-site premises. This allowed our customers to stay in business.

Credit to the NPIP

← I credit the NPIP for many recommendations that we follow including:

- ← Dedicated footwear
- ← Traffic in and out of farm
- ← Cleaning and disinfection
- ← Biosecurity plan
- ← Depopulation and disposal plan

← I feel very good about our biosecurity as a whole. I will be frank in saying that the one thing that keeps me up at night is wild bird control. We have poured a lot of time and finances into this area. We have used a depredation permit, propane cannons, owl decoys, and other items for years without much success. We have purchased a high-end laser system as well that will likely be installed at the time of this presentation.

Danish Entry to Main Farm



Danish Entry to Don Martz Barn



Clean/Dirty Tingley Booties



Propane Cannons



Laser-Mounting Pole



Commercial Pressure Washer for Delivery Trucks



Crate-Wash Building – Clean Side



Crate-Wash Building – Dirty Side



Crate-Wash Building – Inside



Crate-Washer – To Be Delivered Late Summer of 2024



Tire and Undercarriage Disinfection Area



Hydrofoamer



Pump-Sprayer for Delivery Drivers




Pump-Sprayer for Delivery Drivers



Final Thoughts

- As a representative of the North American Gamebird Industry I can say with certainty that the vast majority of gamebird growers take biosecurity and their NPIP-Status seriously.
- Every industry may have a few bad actors. There are many in our industry that attempt to address this to the best of our ability if we see this occur.
- Any biosecurity plan is easy to pick apart, particularly with a farm that has poultry outdoors; albeit covered with netting. However, I can assure you that as an industry we make a good-faith effort to encourage our fellow growers to do everything in their power to well-represent us and to adhere to sound biosecurity practices.



Aside from losing family members and friends, our HPAI event was the toughest trial I ever had to personally endure. It is something that I pray to God we never must face again. I am thankful to the NPIP for helping to mitigate this disaster and for all the preparation that occurred beforehand in order to protect our employees, neighbors, and customers.