NEWS From GEORGIA TECH'S ENGINEERING EXPERIMENT STATION

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TECH TO HELP POULTRY   For Immediate Release

FARMERS USE COMPUTERS   February 17, 1982

ATLANTA, Ga. - Poultry farmers in Georgia may be able to increase profits with the help of computers.

Georgia Tech's Engineering Experiment Station is developing a set of instructions which will make computer equipment easy for farmers to use. No computer program now exists on the market which is directly adaptable to poultry growout operations.

"The instructions will be tailored so that the computer asks the farmer the right questions," says Craig Wyvill, director of poultry research at Tech. "The computer offers the farmer a convenient place to store all of his financial information and gives him the capability of calculating and analyzing costs at a glance. With agribusiness becoming increasingly sophisticated, this tool gives farmers an excellent means of staying on top of their businesses."

Georgia Tech has studied the information processing needs of poultry growout farms for the past six months. Through this effort, Tech engineers also are compiling a list of computer equipment on the market which is suitable for farm information systems. The hardware selected must have the capability of printing out information on paper and cost under $1,000.

With further development, Tech engineers hope to create computer systems which allow poultry farmers to control other phases of their operations. For example, Georgia Tech is evaluating sensors and electronic controls which can measure heat and ammonia levels in growout houses then display this information digitally on meters in the homes of farmers. Wyvill believes it will be possible for a computer to eventually be programmed so that it constantly monitors and even corrects unacceptable conditions.

If Georgia Tech can interest farmers in computer technology, the Institute may be able to compile a data bank of marketing and other poultry-related information. Growers could transfer this data onto their home computer systems by telephone.

"Later, we could even make it possible for growers and processing plants to coordinate their operations via computer and increase efficiency," Wyvill says. "For now, though, we're trying to get acceptance for the technology itself."

Georgia Tech's Engineering Experiment Station is the state's principal center for engineering research and development for the poultry industry. The Georgia General Assembly has provided funds for this program since 1973 and support for the current fiscal year totals nearly $400,000. Tech is using this aid along with federal and industrial grants for research in the areas of computer applications, energy conservation, alternate energy technologies, noise control and wastewater treatment.

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