

Egg producer closes Kansas chicken houses to public

CHASE (AP) — An egg producer in central Kansas, taking precautions because of concerns about bird flu reaching the United States, has closed its environmentally controlled chicken houses to the public and will no longer allow visits to its plant.

“We really like giving tours. Agriculture is an important part of the world and we like sharing our part,

but we don’t want to jeopardize our business or cause any other trouble,” Sherman Miller, general manager of Cal-Maine Foods of Kansas’ plant near Chase in western Rice County, said Monday.

Jackson, Miss.-based Cal-Maine Foods Inc. has 1.3 million laying hens at its Chase operation, where it produces 1.1 million eggs a day.

The potential risk to its flocks

would be from the droppings of wild migratory birds passing through the area, which someone might step on and track into a hen house. Employees sanitize clothing and shoes before entering buildings housing chicken.

Baby chick and turkey dealers in the Hutchinson area say they haven’t had any communication from their suppliers about a poten-

tial threat.

“I hope it stays away,” said Melynn Cannon of Mid-West Feed in Hutchinson, which retails up to 15,000 baby chicks a year. She said she made a call Monday to the hatchery that supplies its chicks and was told the company isn’t concerned.

The C.M. Estes Hatchery in Springfield, Mo., which supplies

baby chicks for Orscheln Farm and Home of Hutchinson, does not expect an impact on its business this spring.

“The state always keeps us informed, and because there have been no outbreaks in this country there’s nothing to warn us about,” a hatchery spokeswoman said. “How could you take precautions against something that hasn’t happened yet?”

Phil Nisley, who raises up to 500 turkeys and 2,000 chicks near Pleasantview, also said he did not have any word from the out-of-state company where he gets his chicks.

The H5N1 strain of the bird flu virus has killed at least 63 people in Southeast Asia, most of them in Vietnam. That strain has ravaged poultry stocks in parts of Asia and spread through Eastern Europe, and it is the leading candidate for causing a global outbreak.

Health authorities are trying to stamp out poultry outbreaks quickly to reduce opportunities for the virus to mutate into a form that can pass easily between people. The virus now is hard for people to catch, and most reported deaths have been linked to humans handling infected poultry.

Family concerned about vindictive sister

DEAR ABBY: Our family has a serious problem with one sibling. Whenever we disagree with this sister, something “happens” to us. Some examples: I told her she was wrong to have started a fight with another sister. Within one week, Child Protective Services was knocking on my door.

My other sister had a quarrel with her, and the very next day that sister went to drive to work and found that “someone” had smashed the windows in her car. My brother said something she didn’t like one day. She visited him a few days later, and the next day his parrots (he breeds parrots) were dead. (She actually bragged to other family members about the parrots and Child Protective Services.)

All three of us get prank calls, and we have spotted her repeatedly driving by our homes. Our parents think these are just “coincidences” and we’re making a big deal out of nothing.

Now this sister needs to go in for surgery, and our parents think we should rally around her.

The three of us want nothing more to do with her. I have even instructed my children to call the police if she ever comes to our home again.

Please print this letter, Abby.

We are hoping it will help our parents see through her and open their eyes. But in the meantime, we don’t know what to do next.

Any ideas?

— SLEEPING WITH ONE EYE OPEN IN MASSACHUSETTS

DEAR SLEEPING: Only this: Your sister appears to be seriously unbalanced. Do not allow yourselves to be guilted into “rallying” around her.

You and the two siblings who have been victims of her vandalism should visit your local police department and file a report about what happened, who you think did it, and why.

You cannot force your parents out of their state of denial.

Only she can do that when, inevitably, one day she finally goes



Abigail Van Buren

• Dear Abby

too far. You are safer at a distance.

DEAR ABBY: I am 25 years old, the mother of two beautiful daughters, “Lisa” and “Lily,” who are 3 1/2 years and 19 months old. Lily suffered a stroke two weeks ago and is now partially paralyzed. She had a prolonged seizure that lasted 2 1/2 hours that I know of, but possibly five hours in all.

She can no longer crawl or sit up by herself.

She must now have heavy and intensive rehabilitation to regain the use of her left side.

I was told that if I had gotten Lily to the ER even 30 minutes later, she’d have died.

My father-in-law and I drove her to the ER ourselves. I was holding her in my arms while she convulsed with the seizure. Each mile we got closer to the hospital, the weaker she became. What kept Lily fighting was hearing my voice as I prayed aloud and feeling my love for her.

I thank God that my daughter is alive today. Please stress to your readers how important it is to call an ambulance when something like this happens.

The ambulance workers can do miracles. If I had called 911, my daughter might not have suffered the stroke.

— LOVING MOTHER, WALTERS, OKLA.

DEAR LOVING MOTHER: Thank you for reminding other parents that in a medical emergency, the smart thing to do is call 911.

The last time the subject was mentioned in this column it was in the context of middle-aged women having heart attacks.

Although the first impulse is to rush a loved one to the hospital ourselves, family members

should realize that emergency medical technicians are trained, and have the equipment on hand, to perform lifesaving interventions. Not only do they know exactly how to get to the hospital, their vehicles have sirens that can reduce the driving time and save precious minutes.

DEAR ABBY: My 22-year-old niece, “Brittany,” married her boyfriend of many years last month in a lavish production of a wedding financed entirely by her father (my brother). On the invitations, it was mentioned that their home was fully furnished, so in lieu of gifts, they’d appreciate money for their honeymoon to the Dominican Republic.

Most family members generously complied and chipped in \$300 to \$500 each. My widowed grandmother, who lived on a fixed income, even sent them \$50.

Four days after their return from the honeymoon, Brittany threw her husband of two weeks out of the house and moved in with her new boyfriend, whom she’d first met when he “entertained” at her bachelorette party three weeks prior. To say we are all surprised is putting it mildly.

No one has heard from Brittany since, and no explanation was offered. My mother recently got her on the phone, and Brittany quickly ended the conversation by claiming that all the money had been “spent” and that her now ex-husband had

any funds that remained. (We know this can’t be true because the distraught groom recently approached my brother and asked him to pay for the annulment.)

Doesn’t etiquette dictate that Brittany return all gifts — including cash — as the marriage ended just days after the checks cleared the bank? Is this why there’s a 12-month window in which to send wedding gifts?

— ANGRY IN SAN FRANCISCO

DEAR ANGRY: Your feelings are justified. The answers to your questions are yes and no.

The rules of etiquette do dictate that unused wedding gifts be returned in a case like this.

However, if the checks didn’t clear the bank until after the unhappy couple returned from the honeymoon, the money was probably spent to pay off their credit cards. Your assumption that there is a 12-month window in which to give wedding gifts is a popular misconception and incorrect. Wedding gifts should be given at the time of the wedding, or after the couple returns from the honeymoon at the latest.

Editor’s note: Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips.

Write Dear Abby at www.Dear-Abby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, Calif. 90069.

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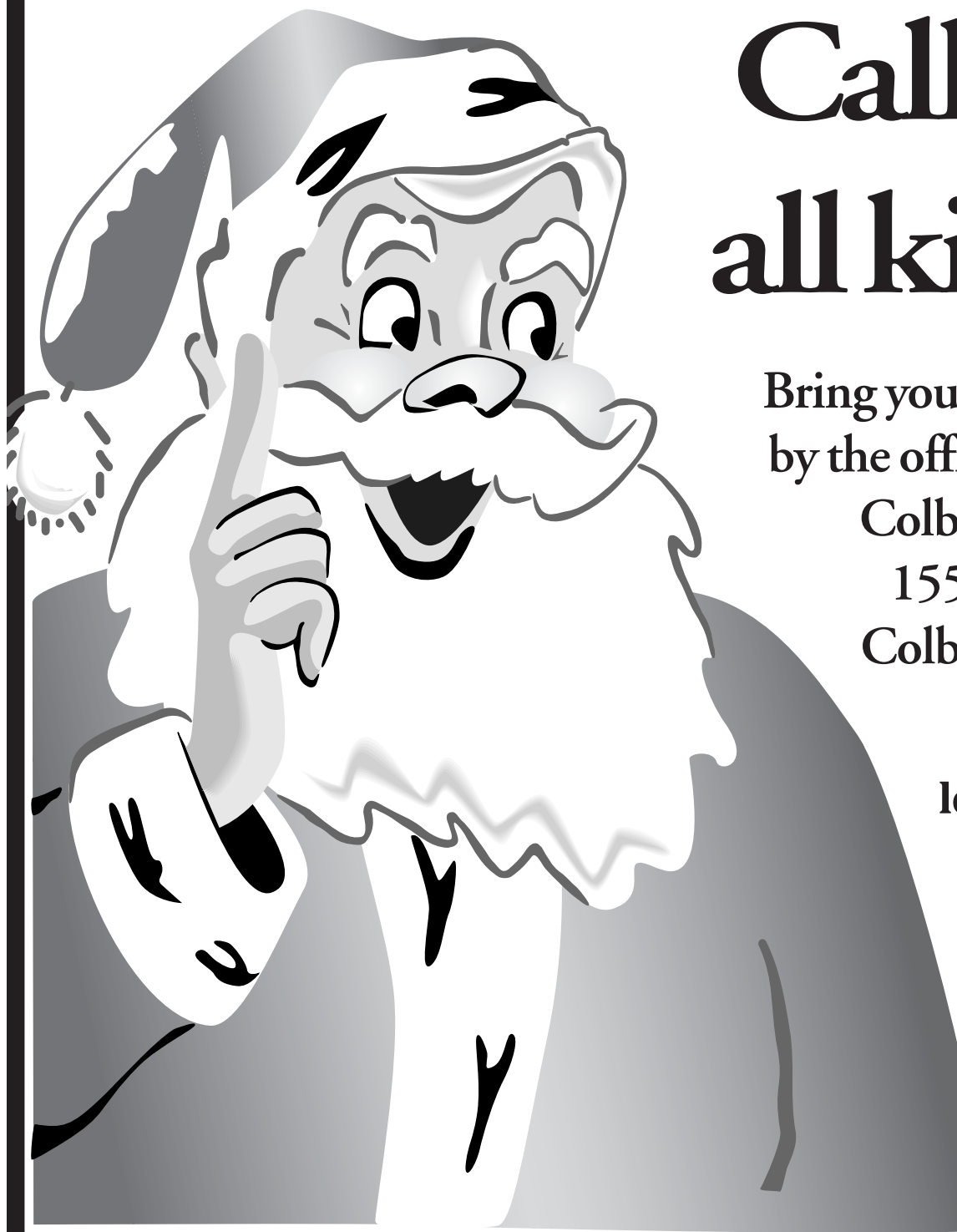
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