

THREE PLUS ONE EQUALS INDUSTRY SUCCESS

MSU poultry student first to pursue MSU/Alcorn Poultry Science Dual-Degree Program

BY CHLOE MADISON

MARYONNA CHAMBERS, a Jackson, Mississippi, native, is the first student to pursue the Mississippi State and Alcorn State University (ASU) dual-degree program in poultry science.

“It’s exciting and a little intimidating to be the first to take advantage of this opportunity because it’s never been done before. In the beginning, I didn’t know what to expect, but progressing through the program, you see and learn new things that can potentially have a significant impact on you as a student,” Chambers said.

Not only is she the first student to take advantage of the program, but she is also the first person in her family to pursue a career in the poultry industry. She said her family is very proud of her, and they can’t wait to see what she accomplishes.

In the dual-degree program, students complete 91 hours toward an ASU Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Sciences with an animal science emphasis and then transfer to MSU to finish the remaining

31 hours for a Bachelor of Science in Poultry Science. In the end, the student leaves with two degrees, one from each institution. Chambers learned about the program during her ASU visit and was intrigued.

Poultry is Mississippi’s largest agricultural commodity, with a value of over \$3 billion in 2024. Mississippi State is one of only six poultry science degree granting programs in the U.S.

Chambers said that she knew poultry science was her calling and that the program would elevate her in her field.

“I wanted to study poultry science because I knew it was a big industry in the U.S. and consumers, like me, eat chicken more than any other protein. I knew I would never be out of a job, which would bring security within my career,” Chambers said. “I believe this program will provide more options and flexibility of where I can go in the industry.”

She considers food safety as a challenge

she would like to tackle in the industry.

“This program motivates me to try and find innovative ways to prevent the spread of foodborne pathogens in the poultry industry,” Chambers said.

She said her main goal is to be the first to graduate from the program and, in return, encourage other students to take advantage of this opportunity. She hopes after she graduates that she will secure a career in the broiler industry.

She encourages students to explore the dual degree poultry science program and jump in if it’s an industry they see themselves in.

“I know it is scary going to a new school, but you must push through to make it to the finish line. Get out of your comfort zone and embrace new experiences because taking a big chance, even if you don’t get everything completely right helps you learn from your mistakes, which, in turn, helps you grow to be a better you,” Chambers said. 🐾

Maryonna Chambers (Photo by David Ammon)

