

Introducing Pastured Poultry

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What is Pastured Poultry?

- Raising chickens, turkeys, ducks etc. in open bottom pens placed directly on pasture
- Pens moved to a fresh area of the pasture daily
- A beneficial approach for producing chickens: Pastures can provide vegetation, insects, and worms to give sufficient nutrients to replace at least 10% of prepared diets, while manure (feces) provides nutrients for grass/forage and/or food crops
- Sustainable; integrates well with other farm enterprises
- Can start small and gradually grow with low capital investment
- Strong demand for farm fresh products; potential for extra income
- Pasture-raised products are generally sold at premium prices
- Consumers perceive pasture-based products to be naturally produced in a healthy environment (Bartlett, 2011)



- Perception is that these products are healthier, tastier, and higher in important nutrients, and support the environment and the welfare of the birds
- Consumers willing to pay higher prices because they believe that the meat is of better nutritional quality
- According to Fanatico et al. (2002), pasture-raised poultry meat has 21% less total fat, 30% less saturated fat, 28% fewer calories, and higher levels of n-3 fatty acids and vitamin A.
- One person can operate the business
- Attract poultry customers to other farm products like vegetables, fruits, etc.
- Poultry raised on pasture are processed on-farm and direct marketed, thereby creating supplemental income on small-diversified family farms



Broiler chickens in pens on pasture at KSU's Research & Demonstration Farm

Kentucky Poultry Industry Facts (2014) – \$1.2billion

- Poultry and Eggs are the #1 agricultural & food commodity in Kentucky



- About 20% of all farm receipts
- Kentucky is number 7 nationwide in terms of broiler production (308 million boilers)
- Over 1 billion eggs, worth \$215 billion, were produced in Kentucky (USDA.gov)
- The broiler-breeder industry in Kentucky employs approximately 6,300 people and generates an additional 20,444 jobs in related industries
- Over 850 large scale poultry farms, 3,000 poultry houses in 45 counties

- The average poultry farm is owned and managed by a family farmer and consists of fewer than five poultry houses
- Over 50% of poultry farmers are, or were, tobacco farmers
- Many farmers entered the business to diversify their revenue because of their concerns about tobacco's future. Kentucky also produces poultry for commercial processing plants located in Tennessee and Indiana
- Kentucky's poultry industry is the largest buyer of Kentucky corn and soybeans— about 25%.
- Large investment in facilities statewide: 5 broiler hatcheries, 2 breeder hatcheries, feed mills, 4 processing plants, layer complexes, and a protein conversion plant

References

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3. Kentucky Poultry Industry Facts (2014). <http://www.kypoultry.org/pfacts/>
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