

A large flock of chickens is scattered across a lush green field. In the background, there is a rustic barn with a grey roof. The scene is set in a rural, hilly area with trees and a clear sky.

# ***Pastured Chicken Profits***

***You too can make a profit  
raising chickens***

# Poultry Opportunities

A couple working 50 hours a week for six months a year on 20 acres can **NET \$25,000 to \$50,000** . What other agricultural enterprise can do that?

- ✓ Per capita consumption of red meat is down while poultry and fish is up.
- ✓ Nutritional awareness and clamor for local production is up.
- ✓ Pastured poultry are lower in saturated fats, no antibiotics or steroids.



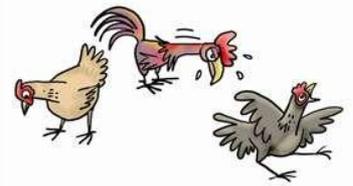
# Poultry Opportunities



For six months, a family works hard to produce and process 10,000 broilers, at a rate of two days a week for 20 weeks.

- ✓ Machinery investment runs between \$10,000 and \$15,000, but can be reduced by buying second hand equipment.
- ✓ Each bird requires about 6 minute per production period.
- ✓ Each bird requires about 4 minutes per processing time.
- ✓ Fixed costs run about \$4.00 - \$4.80 per bird.
- ✓ Selling price of about \$2.35/lbs and average weight of 4lbs.
- ✓ Profit yield of \$5.00 or **\$30.00 per hour of producer's time.**

# Getting Started



- Start with 50 – 100 chicks and plan to eat or give away all this first batch.
- Buy from a well known hatchery that will airmail to you.
- Have a set up Brooder waiting for them and get the chicks warm (90F) as soon as possible.
- Provide unlimited access to feed and water.
- Use dry sawdust or shavings for bedding.
- Use regular chick feed for this first adventure, then customize as possible.

# Choosing a Breed

- Chicken breeds are all different with strong points in one area and weak points in others.
- Standard American breeds that are called “dual purpose” are the Rhode Island Reds, White Rocks, and New Hampshire Reds.



- ✓ Produce a 4 pound carcass in 12 weeks

- On the Meat end, the reigning king is the Cornish Cross – either white or red.



- ✓ Produce a 4-pound carcass in 7-8 weeks.

- The older the bird the tougher the meat.
- Big plus for Cornish Cross is Marketability
  - ✓ Cornish Cross is double breasted and what the consumer is use to.
  - ✓ Consumer acceptance is critical to your marketing effort

# The Brooder

- Need 25sqft of floor space for 100 birds up to 4 weeks.
- Brooder should be draft and predator proof.
- Allow natural sunlight as much as possible to stimulate the pituitary gland.
- If possible, thermostatically controlled heat lamp to provide 90 degree heat.
- Wood shaving on the flooring at a depth of about 4 inches.
- If the brooder starts to smell like ammonia, clean bedding.
- Reduce heat after 48 hours by a 3-4 degrees as chicks get stronger.
- If you are raising more than 200-300 chicks, section of in 300 chick groups.



# Starting the Chicks

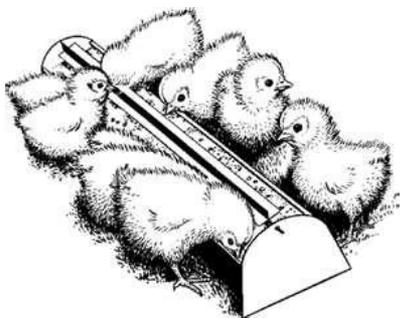
- **New baby chicks can generally go up to 72 hours without food or water (shipping time).**
- **Small feed troughs work better than round ones and provide more access space.**
- **Waterer should be elevated for cleanliness and easy access during drinking.**
- **The gizzard needs silica and grit. Provide some on a newspaper and cover with a little food.**
- **Provide small vegetable matter that is in season for additional minerals and vitamins.**
- **Do Not de-beak your chicks, it renders them incapable of foraging affectively.**
- **Visual observation is key to successful brooding /raising of chicks.**
- **Generally 1 -2 percent of the chicks die within the first few days.**



# Feed Rations

- Perhaps nothing is more crucial than what the bird eats.
- Chickens on pasture get 20% of their nutrients from the pasture and 80% from feed.
- Baby chicks require a high level of protein.

Ingredient	Percent
Corn	52
Roasted Soybeans	29
Crimped Oats	11
Feed Limestone	1
Fish Meal	3.5
Kelp Meal	.5
Probiotics	.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>



# The Pen

- Pastured poultry require shelter, predator protection, and efficient feeding and watering.
- High density, short duration grazing is the answer with poultry.
- Each pen should hold between 75 – 100 birds.
- Pens should be moved daily or twice a day to insure fresh pasture.



- The chicken tractor is a floorless cage, 10 x 12 x 2 and light enough to be moved with the aid of a little dolly.
- The framework is generally wood and carefully braced for strength.
- Half of the pen is covered on top for shade, rain, and wind protection.
- The back and half of the sides are also covered for wind and predator protection.
- The waterer is a commercial hanging type and hung from a brace in the middle.
- Trough feeders are used for feeding.
- Predator control is an issue both day and night. (Foxes, racoons, hawks, and others)
- If possible, a Livestock Guardian Dog is a real asset to any chicken operation.



# Moving the Chicks to Pasture

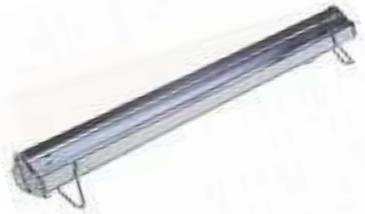
- Sometime between 2 and 4 weeks, the baby chicks are ready to move out to pasture.
- To minimize stress, birds should be moved early in the day.
- Obviously you only move them on a suitable day.
- Be patient, don't over populate transport crate, have food and water waiting.
- Don't move the pen for 24 hours, check on at least twice that day.
- Make sure chicks are sleeping under shelter.



# Pasture Logistics



- Pens should be arranged in a wing formation.
  - ✓ This allows for easy access and keeping track of movements.
- Take water out in a large, white container to fill the individual waterers
- Take feed out in large bins of some sort that is water and vermin proof.
  - ✓ Calculate feed at one gallon of feed weighs 7 pounds.
- Pens should be moved then feed and water added.
  - ✓ This encourages foraging immediately .
- Be careful moving pens the first time as chicks are not use to moving and can get injured.
- Daily moves reduce feed consumption by 30% and produce a healthy low fat bird.
- Each pen in putting down an equivalent of 300 lbs of nitrogen per acre.



# Pasture Qualities

- Pasture consumption varies dependent on type, freshness and length.
- Pasture length should be between 1 and 4 inches.
- Grazing behind another species generally produces good grazing length.
- If moving over unused pasture then mowing in front of the chickens may be needed.
- Easier to move pen over shorter, even pasture areas.
- Hanging waterers may get caught on clumps of grass and not work properly
- Tall grass reduces airflow in and around pen which is not good for the chickens.
- Predators avoid shorter pasture areas as it makes them more exposed.
- Better if chickens are moved over areas that are not singular in type like alfalfa.



# Predators

Nothing can into your profits faster than predators. You must take every precaution to protect your birds and eliminate predators when necessary. Various predators leave a specific calling card that identifies what type of predator you are dealing with. Opossums and Raccoons are by far the two worst predators.

- **Raccoons:** Generally eat what they kill on site, bite off the head first.
- **Foxes:** Leave a pile of feathers where they made the kill and then carry the carcass off.
- **Possums:** Kill birds, more than they can eat and will tear the guts out.
- **Weasel:** Will bight the bird in the neck leaving two holes. Will also kill for sport.
- **Birds of Prey:** A pile of feathers at point of attack and then a trail of feathers

Invest in a good varmint gun and a powerful spotlight . Most predators will freeze when lit up by a spotlight long enough to eliminate them.



# Processing

## *On-Farm Slaughter: The Advantages*

- Chicken processing facilities may be miles away from your farm location.
- Processing plants may charge between \$1.00 to \$1.25 per bird.
- Processing plants generally electrocute the bird and then cut their throats
- Evisceration is done with a stainless steel loop that often tears the intestines.
- Some processing plants put the birds through 40 separate chlorine water baths.
- Cooling vats often accumulate fecal sludge in the bottom.



# Processing

## *On-Farm Slaughter: The Advantages*

- Slaughtering on the farm reduces chicken transport stress.
- Is cheaper over the long-run.
- Lets you set the time and day of processing.
- Is more sanitary overall.
- Provides for family time working together and is beneficial at tax time.
- Lets you compost the remains, hence gaining another benefit from production.



# Processing Mechanics

- Twelve hours before slaughter stop feeding the chickens so the caw can clean out
- On the day of slaughter, catch the birds and place 6-8 to a crate.
- Take to the processing site and follow the following process:
  - ✓ Cut off the legs
  - ✓ Cut out the oil sack on top of the tail
  - ✓ Slit the skin to dislodge the caw
  - ✓ Dislodge the caw and pull the esophagus and windpipe out of the neck
  - ✓ Slit the skin just above the vent
  - ✓ Slide your hand in and pull out the entrails ensuring the esophagus and windpipe come
  - ✓ Cut down under the vent and remove all offal
  - ✓ Reach in and hook the lungs with finger and remove both sides
  - ✓ Wash out to ensure clean, do a visual look and then place in cooling vat.

# Marketing

Product marketing deals with the first of the "7P"s of marketing, which are Product, Pricing, Place, and Promotion, Packaging, Positioning & People.

Direct marketing is practiced by businesses of all sizes — from the smallest start-up to the leaders on the Fortune 500. A well-executed direct advertising campaign can prove a positive return on investment by showing how many potential customers responded to a clear call-to-action.

## Direct Marketing Channels

- Email Marketing
- Online Tools
- Mobile
- Direct Mail
- Telemarketing
- Voicemail Marketing
- Insert Media
- Out-of-Home
- Direct Response Magazines and Newspapers
- Direct Selling
- Grassroots/Community Marketing

# Resources

<http://www.chickens101.com/>

<http://www.farminfo.org/livestock/chickens.htm>

<http://www.cyndilou6.com/>

<http://www.backyardchickens.com/>

<https://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/poultry/>

<http://poultryone.com/>

<http://www.ibiblio.org/farming-connection/grazing/pastpoul/resource.htm>

<http://www.apppa.org/>

<http://www.fowlbreeders.com/>

# Questions

