ORGANIC POULTRY PRODUCTION
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Growth of Industry
• 1997-2001 – surge of certified organic poultry production
• Certified organic layers
  537,826 (1997) to 1.6 mil (2001)

• Certified organic broilers
• Certified organic turkeys
  1997-750 → 98,000 (2001)

2002 – USDA National Organic Program
www.ams.usda.gov/nop/indexIE.htm
• National standards dictate how broilers, turkeys, layers and others are to be managed and raised

Standards – poultry not required to have access to pasture, but must be given freedom to:
1) exercise
2) access to fresh air
3) exposure to direct sunlight
• Birds can be “housed” if weather is bad - exception

Organic producer will pasture the birds and/or house in semi-confinement and temporary confinement
• Producers must create “Organic System Plan” if seek certification
  1. Comply with national rules
  2. Describe how to manage flock, house, feed, waste, handling, health, welfare, and maintain records

From: Agricultural Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA)
PO Box 3657
Fayetteville, AR 72702
(800) 346-9140
www.attra.ncat.org
HUSBANDRY AND MANAGEMENT

- Birds: Day-old chicks, all species and breeds
- Land: Outdoor access (land must be organic)

HUSBANDRY AND MANAGEMENT

- Housing: Semi-confinement or pasture
- Density: Allow for natural behavior
- Equipment: Electric fence, poultry netting, feed troughs, water fountains

- Labor: Keep accurate records
- Operation: Year-round
- Advantages: Premium prices for products, environmentally friendly, endorsed by animal rights groups
- Disadvantages: Record keeping, regulated management practices, higher feed costs

BIRDS

- Breed selection is vital to success
- Nat. Organic Standards prohibit use of conventional medicines/treatments – so get a breed that is hardy

BIRDS

- Purchase day-old chicks from conventional stock
- Breed and hatch own
- Purchase started pullets, but must come from certified organic breeders
RAISING BIRDS ON PASTURE

• Standards – “living conditions which accommodate health and natural behavior of animals”
  • Pasturing is compliant, but not required
  • Outdoor access with minimum plant cover are compliant
  • Outdoor cement yards are not compliant
• Many producers keep birds on pasture for 6 months

• If birds on pasture, have to follow the National Organic Standards for pasture seeding
• Use organic seed where available and approved practices to control weeds
• Organic buyers of birds or eggs may have own guidelines

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

Checklist
• Feeders
• Waterers
• Litter
• Nest boxes
• Artificial lights
• Electric fence
• Approved cleaners
• Organic certified seed-on pasture

• Source: Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) – www.omri.org
Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (715) 772-3153
www.mosesorganic.org

HOUSING

• Certain living conditions
  • Exercise
  • Escape bad weather
  • Provide fresh air
  • Provide for natural behaviors
  • Move birds without injury
• Semi-confinement shelters
  • Equipped with access doors so birds can move freely between inside and outside
• Some buyers may dictate stocking density - standards do not stipulate
• If build a large or long house for your birds, you should have many access doors – the number of doors not stipulated in standards
• Should check with your local certifier

HOUSING FOR LAYERS
• Lighting – standards do not include guidelines for artificial lighting or access to natural light and dark cycles
• If use artificial lighting to induce molting should check with local certifier if allowed
• It is of course important to provide artificial light in the fall and winter months to stimulate good egg production

• Induced molting may be looked upon buyers of eggs as “inhumane”, so check with your local certified if you can molt a flock
• Use of cleaning products
• It is standard practice to clean and disinfect broiler, turkey, and layer houses in between flocks to prevent buildup of pathogens

• Be sure to check the list of allowed and prohibited substances for cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing
• The Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) screen products to use – www.omri.org

BIRD HEALTH/WELFARE

Disease Prevention Plan
• Can include - sanitizing incubators
  - disinfecting brooder houses
  - nutritionally balanced feed
• Routine vaccinations are permitted for common diseases such as Marek’s Newcastle, and Coccidiosis

Health Resources:
1. Remedies for Health Problems of the Organic Laying Flock – Kingbird Farm – (607) 657-2860
   karma@kingbirdfarm.com
2. The Chicken Health Handbook – Storey Books – (800) 441-5700
   www.storey.com

ORGANIC POULTRY PRODUCTION

Processing References:
  Organic Meat and Poultry
  Processing Basics
  www.mda.state.mn.us/esap.organic

  Home Processing of Poultry
  www.extension.umn.edu

References:
  Commercial Egg Production and Processing
  http://ag.ansc.purdue.edu

  Processing Farm-Raised Poultry
  www.oznet.ksu.edu
Organic Poultry
• For poultry to be sold as “certified organic”, it must be processed in facilities certified by an accredited certifying agency
• Processing plants currently meeting USDA regulations can easily meet additional organic requirements

Poultry and eggs accepted by plant must be certified organic
• Appropriate clean outs must be done prior to processing organic poultry or eggs
• Packaging must be free of synthetic fungicides or preservatives

Consumer & Sales Wants/Needs

PRODUCING EGGS
• IL
• Limited License – Producer dealer sells graded eggs produced by his own flock of 3,000 birds or less - $15
• Full License – Producer dealer sells graded eggs produced by his own flock of 3,001 birds or more - $50

RAISING POULTRY
• IL
• Producer needs a license if produces and sells over 5,000 birds a year
• www.agr.state.il.us – Meat and Poultry Inspection Act
ORGANIC POULTRY PRODUCTION

Enterprise Management
- Organic poultry production can be a money-making business
- Like commercial poultry production, the organic poultry producer must keep track of income and expenses

Record Keeping
- Pasture maps
- History for fields, pastures, breeding stock
- Soil and water tests
- Organic status of chicks, pullets, feed, seeds
- Receipt of organic inputs
- Crop pest and disease reports

Finances
- Feed expenses will be the biggest expenditure
- Certified organic poultry feed
- Reduce feed costs by purchasing in bulk

Develop a Budget
- Weigh the cost of feed, chicks/pullets against market premiums for products
- Calculate break-even to determine how much more can charge for products sold

- Flock health records: vaccinations, mortalities
- Keep labels from vaccines
- Breeding records
- Keep labels from cleaning agents
- Keep labels from purchased feed

- Keep a record of equipment, and clean out
- Keep records on slaughter processing and verification of organic certification of slaughter facilities
- Keep sales receipts/invoices
Pasture Pen Budget

- Income – Sale of birds/eggs
- Expenses:
  - Fixed: Brooder house, pens, brooders, waterers/feeders, pen moving equipment
  - Variable: Chicks, litter, utilities, feed, marketing, labor, insurance, pasture rent, miscellaneous

Generic Organic Poultry Budget

Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems
www.cias.wisc.edu

- Income – bird sales, egg sales, spent hens, manure sales, misc.
- Expenses:
  - Feed
  - Poultry – bedding, chicks, insurance, marketing, fuel, power, repairs, maintenance, tracking
  - Buildings
  - Labor

Returns
1. Gross receipts
2. Minus feed costs
3. Returns over feed costs (3=1-2)
4. Minus other variable costs

Certification
- In IL the Department of Agriculture does not get involved with the certification process
- The National Organic Program (USDA) administers the certification process
- There is a Cost Share Program – provides reimbursement of 75% or up to $500 for help with certification cost.
## ORGANIC POULTRY VALUE
### Sept. 3, 2007

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<th>Eggs-Brown</th>
<th>$/carton</th>
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<tr>
<td>XL, dozen</td>
<td>2.29-2.61</td>
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<tr>
<td>½ dozen</td>
<td>1.20-1.58</td>
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<tr>
<td>L dozen</td>
<td>2.24-2.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>¼ dozen</td>
<td>1.15-1.49</td>
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## Certified Organic Young Chicken

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>$/pound</th>
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<tr>
<td>Whole Fryer</td>
<td>1.96-2.45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boneless/Skinless Breast</td>
<td>5.75-7.16</td>
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<td>Bone-in Breast</td>
<td>3.60-4.21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whole Leg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thighs</td>
<td>1.99-2.45</td>
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</tbody>
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### References