Exploring Poultry as a Farm Enterprise

2015 National Training Workshop - AgrAbility
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Session Learning Objectives

Participants will . . .

- learn about poultry production cycles & the physical chores needed for poultry
- become aware of how some poultry chores could be addressed by individuals with limitations
- recognize how a poultry enterprise might be appropriate for individuals with limitations
So, you think you might want to raise poultry.

or

You know someone who might benefit from the information presented.
Advantages of a poultry enterprise

- small in size & light in weight
- not aggressive
- tasks can be automated
- production cycle of meat poultry is short
- efficient converters of feed to meat or eggs
- a small-scale poultry enterprise can be potentially profitable
- start-up costs are relatively small
- poultry can be raised inside or outside
- there is likely a consistent local demand
Drawbacks of a Poultry Enterprise

- Time & effort required – daily care
- Some investment for birds/equipment
- Good possibility that rodents will find you
- There will be death loss
- Winter care can be difficult
- Disease is always a threat
- Difficult to mix species
- Noise & odors
- May not be economical
- Mismanagement is common
# Poultry Production Cycles - Meat Birds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bird Type</th>
<th>Growth Period</th>
<th>Weight Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broiler Chickens</td>
<td>6-8 weeks</td>
<td>4.5 to 6.5 lbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roaster Chickens</td>
<td>8-10 weeks</td>
<td>7 to 12 lbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkeys</td>
<td>16-20 weeks</td>
<td>12 to 25 lbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ducks</td>
<td>7-8 weeks</td>
<td>4 lbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geese</td>
<td>15-20 weeks</td>
<td>6 to 12 lbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Game Birds</td>
<td>15-16 weeks</td>
<td>1 to 3 lbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea Fowl</td>
<td>8-14 weeks</td>
<td>3 lbs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Egg Production Cycles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maturity</th>
<th>Productivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chickens are 18-22 weeks of age before they begin to lay eggs</td>
<td>56-72 weeks of egg production (392-504 days)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea Fowl are 17-20 weeks of age before they begin to lay eggs</td>
<td>Sporadic egg production</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Egg Production Cycles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal</th>
<th>Age at Start of Laying Cycle</th>
<th>Eggs Produced</th>
<th>Laying Cycle Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turkeys</td>
<td>28 weeks old (7 months)</td>
<td>80-100 eggs</td>
<td>25 weeks (175 days)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ducks</td>
<td>26-28 weeks of age (6-7 months)</td>
<td>160 eggs</td>
<td>40 weeks (280 days)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geese</td>
<td>28 weeks of age (7 months)</td>
<td>50-60 eggs</td>
<td>Spring to Fall (270 days)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PHYSICAL CHORES FOR GENERAL POULTRY PRODUCTION
PHYSICAL CHORES RELATED TO MEAT BIRD ENTERPRISES
PHYSICAL CHOSES RELATED TO EGG BIRD ENTERPRISES
How does one address specific chores and tasks? Let’s talk.

- Assistive technology
- Automation (feeding, watering, lighting, egg collecting, egg handling & packing, etc.)
- Other people (family members, assistants or employees)
Other Poultry Enterprising Opportunities

- small scale hatchery
- pullet production
- feather enterprise
  - fly-tying, crafts and fashion
- fertile egg business
  - embryology projects
- bird rental
  - for agritourism, entertainment, educational or insect control purposes