

--- CHIT CHAT ---

By JOE COWLEY
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What produces 246,000 pounds of meat a year from a house 40 feet by 200 feet on a lot 70 feet by 600 feet?

Before you answer, we might add this is the equivalent of the meat produced by 265 1,000 pound steers. It's amazing, but true. This is the amount of meat 20,000 broiler type chickens will produce from four broods a year.

Poultry experts report that chicken consumption has just about doubled from 1940 to 1960. Most of it consists of broilers or fryers. And chicken is racing hamburger in the meat counter sales. Meat buyers and butchers admitted it last Thursday night during the dinner meeting of the Rogue Valley Broiler Growers association.

This was one of those delightful meetings when you receive plenty of food for thought and for the stomach.

Golden brown fried chicken was served on heaping platters at North's Chuck Wagon. Apparently, the management wants to be sure its patrons do a lot of serious eating. The rustic-type of chairs are the clinging type. Once you sit down they don't let go very easy. This, of course, puts the emphasis where it belongs, on the food, for this type of chair firmly anchors the would-be after-dinner speaker. In fact, it appeared Thursday that one of the more robust speakers might have trouble separating himself from his chair as he attempted to bounce to his feet.

Purpose of the meeting was to convince those people dealing with meat sales in this valley that it pays to push chicken. Several fryer point-of-sales ads were displayed around the banquet room. The newest is one which gives an easy to prepare recipe on low calorie fried chicken. With the slim silhouette the goal of every woman 16 to 60, this is sure to make a hit. Another new recipe is corn-crisped chicken. Eight to nine ounces of ready-to-eat meat per two pounds of bird is a good ratio, it was pointed out. The housewife's slogan has shifted from "Ready to Heat" to "Ready to Eat." With both man and wife working, this has become a necessity. (We know!)

But why Oregon Fryers? Shelf life of a fryer is seven days. If the fryers are shipped in from out-of-state sources this means at least three days en route. That leaves four days of shelf life. The housewife buys the bird or birds on Thursday and fries them on Sunday—four days later.

This means the fryer is right on the ragged edge of possible spoilage. So, look for the green and white label—"this fryer grown in Oregon." It's your guarantee of freshness. Otherwise, the only sign of approaching spoilage is separation of the meat from the bone. And this can't be seen from looking at the outside.

Dal Ferry, chairman of the Oregon Fryer commission (a self-help organization for promotion of broiler sales) pointed out that five years ago only three growers attended a broiler growers' dinner here. They represented the local fryer industry. Thursday night approximately nine broiler growers attended the monthly dinner.

What does the broiler industry mean to the Rogue valley? The valley produced 1 million fryers last year with a gross profit of \$600,000 to \$750,000. This means \$125,000 in new money, it was reported. It represents a half million dollars spent on feed, \$130,000 on chickens, \$300,000 in processing.

Another way to look at it is that every broiler ranch is a small factory. For instance, Ray Elliott, Grants Pass, president of the Rogue Valley Broiler Growers association, plans to have 90,000 birds this spring. That means he will use 220 tons of feed a year. It takes 2 1/2 pounds of feed to produce one pound on a fryer. The broiler industry has probably one of the more efficient farm factory systems. Formerly, it took the growers nine weeks to feed out a young fryer and ready it for market, then eight weeks, and five days, and now eight weeks and two days. The quicker the bird goes to market the less chance of disease and a lower mortality rate. This also means a better feed conversion.

The broiler growers prefer a hybrid "red" bird such as the Nichols 108 for the female and the White Rock Cornish bred for the male. This is probably the most rapidly changing farm industry with new developments every day. Automatic waterers and feeders are developments of recent years. Constant experiments are going on at Oregon State college and other poultry research centers to develop more of a meat type bird.

Local advantages for the broiler industry are inexpensive building materials, dry, mild climate. To help lick the high cost of feed corn is now being growing more extensively in the Mid-Columbia valley and freighted down by barge on the Columbia river. More corn is also being grown in the Willamette valley plus soybeans.

Fryers are finding wider U.S. acceptance. It was pointed out. In 1934 the United States had 34 million fryers. In 1961 there are 2 billion. During that time, consumption of fried chicken per person has risen from 1 1/2 ounces to 30 pounds. However, broiler growers like everyone else have been caught in the cost-price squeeze. Four years ago average receipts to growers were 25 cents a bird. Now it is 10 cents a bird if a grower is lucky. Ultimate goal of each grower is to develop a three-pound broiler from a 24-ounce egg.

One of the highlights of the meeting Thursday night was the research in the broiler industry conducted by Charles M. Fischer, OSC poultry marketing specialist. His researchers conducted a market survey of 520 families in July and August last year.

His people found these main facts: Consumers associate fryers mostly with the Fourth of July, Labor Day, guests and birthdays. Fifty-five per cent had purchased fryers within the last seven days. Less than 3 per cent said they never cook fryers. Approximately 46 per cent bought from independent stores and 51 per cent from chain stores. Three main reasons for purchasing fryers were—like them, price, and ease of preparation. Things buyers look for in purchasing fryers were appearance, size, color, Oregon grown and price.

Other things learned were: Sixty per cent considered fryers every day food, 20 per cent for holidays and 14 per cent saw no difference. Most of the fryer buyers pan fried the birds, 42 per cent oven fried them and 23 per cent baked them. Most of the consumers preferred 2 1/2 to 3 1/4 pound birds.

Fifty-three per cent knew they had purchased their last fryers from Oregon broilers, and 37 per cent didn't know. Sixty-two per cent thought fryers should be labelled as to state of origin and 30 per cent said it didn't matter. Such a label indicated freshness to 38 per cent, 29 per cent thought it meant peopleness. Forty-one per cent bought Oregon fryers because it indicates freshness and 37 per cent because they thought they should patronize their own state. Forty-seven per cent would be willing to pay 2 cents per pound more for getting Oregon fryers and 33 per cent were unwilling.

Now, Oregon broiler growers produce 65 to 70 per cent of the birds consumed in this state. This means that about 30 per cent of the fryers eaten in this state are imported compared to approximately 50 per cent in earlier years. In other words, 30 per cent more of Oregon consumers could be eating Oregon grown birds. The big difference between the huge integrated broiler industry in the southern states and Oregon's is cost of production—chiefly labor. There's a lot of difference between 50 cents and a dollar an hour. So, this means even more mechanization for Oregon growers.

Generally, the poultry industry's curse is overproduction. The College Poultry Survey committee reports overexpansion in all types of poultry production . . . eggs, turkeys and broilers . . . and resulting in sharp drops in prices and earnings.

This group of experts from several colleges in the mid-west and east is considered authoritative. Sad to say, the committee reports that neither sales promotion nor advertising campaigns can completely offset the flood of poultry products now expected. Farmers, nationwide, will have to cut back their production as planned or see real marketing trouble ahead.

Western Oregon Weed Series Set On March 28

Salem—Eight western Oregon towns will be focal points for weed meetings scheduled between March 28 and April 7 by the state agriculture and highway departments and Oregon State college.

Keyed around highway employees who use herbicides (chemical weed killers) and soil sterilants, sessions will be open to others interested, including licensed chemical spray applicators and anyone else engaged in these operations.

The schedule of meeting places, with 10 a.m. the opening hour:

Eugene—March 28, courthouse auditorium basement south of the county courthouse proper.

Roseburg—March 29, courthouse auditorium.

Medford—March 30, Bigham hall, fairgrounds.

Klamath Falls—March 31, lecture room, fairgrounds.

Portland—April 4, recreation room, Banfield maintenance station, 5821 NE Glisan st.

Hillsboro—April 5, upstairs in city hall.

Tillamook—April 6, YMCA auditorium.

Salem—April 7, conference room, state department of agriculture, 158 12th, NE.

With the exception of localized weed problems which will be described by the respective county agent presiding at each session, the same program features will carry through the series.

W. H. Koesan and J. F. Svith of the state highway landscape section at Salem will describe vegetation controls and seed and mulch for erosion and vegetation control. Rex Warren of the extension service, Corvallis, will give a review of chemicals and spraying. Ray Kelso, herbicide control supervisor for the state department of agriculture, will talk on the herbicide application control law and review damages reported the past season.

An examination period will conclude each session. During this those who desire may take the state applicator tests or renew their licenses, Kelso states.

These sessions to help sprayers keep abreast have been held annually since 1954 and alternated between eastern and western Oregon in the last few years.

Farm Pond Study On Best Fishing Underway at OSU

Corvallis—Readers who dream of playing hooky to go fishing will envy a group of Oregon State College researchers who plan to do some bass fishing on office hours this spring.

But they don't have to sneak off to do it. The expedition is on the up and up, explained Carl E. Bond, associate professor of fish and game management. The scientists want to see which of four experimental ponds north of Corvallis provide the best fishing.

Two of the ponds are stocked with both bass and bluegill. The other two are stocked just with bass. Main purpose of the study is to compare rate of growth and survival rate. Bond pointed out that "the books say bass eat bluegill. This implies that bass in the bass-and-bluegill ponds would grow faster than those in bass only ponds. But this theory doesn't seem to hold true in the OSC experimental ponds."

Started Last Spring The study started last spring and will continue through the coming summer, so results aren't complete yet. However, the rate of growth for all four ponds was nearly the same the first year. Graduate student Harold Hansen is working with Bond on the study.

An earlier experiment on the Soap Creek ponds showed production was 12 times greater in the pond where enough nitrogen and phosphorus fertilizer was added than in the pond with no fertilizer added. The fertilizer increased growth of natural fish foods which gave the fish more to eat, and increased their weight correspondingly. Graduate students working with Bond in this study were Dave McIntyre and Gary Isaac.

Farmers interested in further information about fertilizer use in farm fish ponds should contact their county extension agent or Andrew S. Landforce, OSC extension wildlife management specialist, Corvallis.

A University of Illinois dairy specialist found many dairy feeds to be low in salt. He recommends that all dairy cattle be given constant free access to salt.

Fewer But More, Hatcheries Show Throughout State

Salem—Chicken and turkey hatcheries are not immune to the new agricultural trend wrapped up in the now familiar words "fewer but more."

In other words, fewer people are producing more baby chicks and more turkey poult. This is evident in the current member compilation of the Oregon Poultry Improvement plan and its counterpart plan for turkeys.

Earl Reisma, supervisor for these two programs of the state department of agriculture, says that today 36 hatcheries and dealers, with a 3,920,500 chick capacity, are en-

rolled in the program. Ten years ago 61 hatcheries had a combined capacity of 3,668,916.

What's more, most of the hatcheries are turning out chicks the year around, though not necessarily to full capacity for every run. Ten years ago a three-month operating schedule was the general rule.

Turkeys in Pattern Changes in turkey hatcheries follow much the same pattern as for chicks. Ten years ago 38 hatcheries and dealers were in the program, today only 21. Combined capacity for poult is down,

however, from 2,778,000 10 years ago to 2,138,782 at the count this year.

One thing has remained fairly constant in the poultry records. That is the demand, as reflected in the hatchery output, for White Leghorns. They remain the favorite for laying flocks. On the other hand, great changes have occurred in the breeds used primarily for broiler production compared with 10 years ago. The bottom has virtually dropped out of the demand for the older standbys, the Rhode Island Reds and Barred Rocks; today the broiler hatch is mostly crossbreeds.

Hampshires, too, are next door to passe in hatcheries, with 11,950 represented in this breed on the 1950-60 program compared with 219,923 in 1949-50.

Incidentally, the poultry improvement plan, a cooperative voluntary program with the national plan, embraces 90 per cent of the hatcheries in the state.

Some switches have occurred also in turkey breeds. The big broad breasted bronze has continued the favorite through the years but this year no miscellaneous breeds are enrolled in the turkey program. On a 10-year basis, the large whites have gained ground (1,850 vs 13,558 breed-

ers), as have the Beltsville Whites (5,080 vs 23,657). Turkey breeder hens under the plan this year total 251,884 or 55,000 more than last year.



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