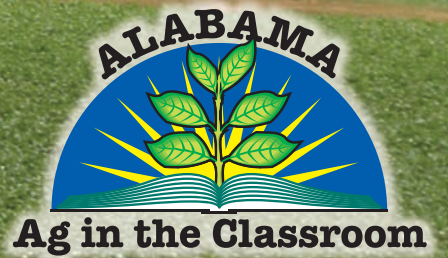


Alabama Ag Mag Poultry



Poultry Vocabulary

Broiler – chicken that is genetically selected to produce meat

Rooster – male chicken

Hen – female chicken

Comb – the red-pink fleshy growth on the head of chickens

Gizzard – the part of a bird's stomach that contains tiny stones, which helps it grind up food for digestion

Incubator – a ventilated box, which maintains a constant temperature and humidity that is used to hatch fertile eggs

Contract Poultry Grower – a farmer that has signed a contract with a company to raise chickens or produce eggs

Layer – a chicken that is genetically selected to produce eggs

Commercial – large scale poultry production, where farmers contract with a company to produce poultry or eggs

Antibiotics – medicine given to animals, including poultry, to treat and prevent diseases

Flock – a large group of chickens or turkeys

Tom – male turkey

Hen – female turkey

Poultry Farming

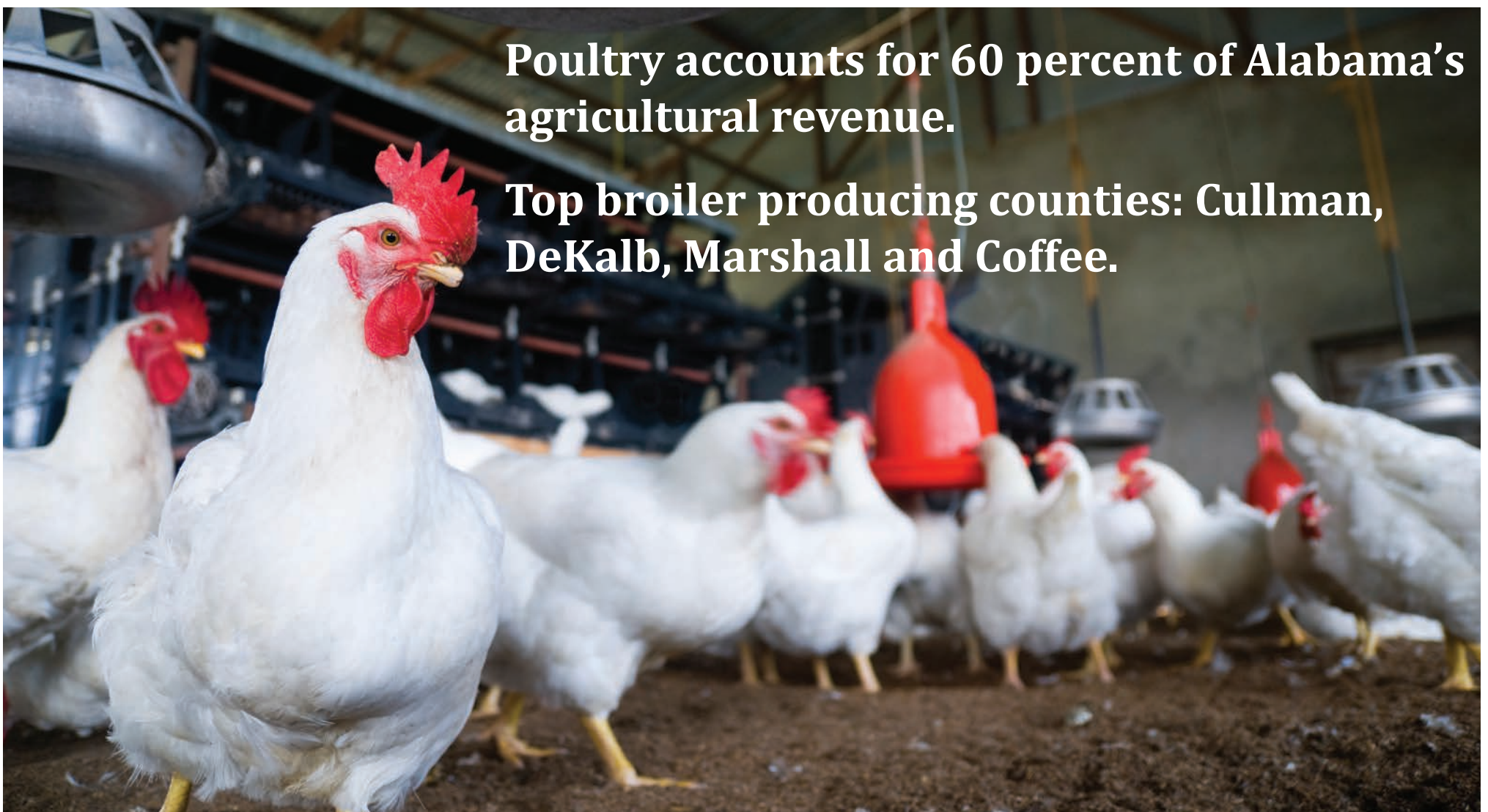
In Alabama, poultry production is mostly broiler chickens. This means a contract grower is given chicks to grow to market weight in a time frame of five to eight weeks. As a contract grower, the farmer provides housing, equipment, bedding, power, heat and care for the chickens during the growing period. The poultry company provides the chicks, feed, transportation and any needed medicines.

Did you know?

The average American eats 85 pounds of chicken in one year!

Poultry accounts for 60 percent of Alabama's agricultural revenue.

Top broiler producing counties: Cullman, DeKalb, Marshall and Coffee.



Chicken Chat: How are broilers grown?

1. Companies like Tyson, Koch Foods and Pilgrims Pride provide the chicks for farmers to raise.
2. Farmers feed the chicks food provided by the company. Most feeds consist of a mixture of corn, soybean meal and vitamins.
3. Farmers grow the chickens to a certain weight, depending on the contract company and where they will end up.



4. The company picks up the chickens and transports them to its respective processing plant.



Labels Reading “Hormone Free” or “No Added Hormones” are a way for companies to market products. All chicken is free of added hormones in the United States, no matter the label!

How do chickens grow so fast?

Chickens grow so large so quickly because of selective breeding, proper diets and climate-controlled houses. In the 1950s, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) made providing added hormones illegal in the poultry industry. Poultry breeders select chickens with desirable traits like high feed efficiency, white feathers and larger portions of breast meat. Continued selection of these traits through multiple generations leads to genetic improvement.

Chicken Consumption

Americans consume more chicken than any other country in the world. It is the No. 1 protein consumed in the United States.

Eggs

What color egg will a chicken lay?

Chickens with white earlobes usually produce white eggs.

Chickens with red earlobes produce brown eggs.

There are also breeds of chickens that lay green, blue, pinkish and yellowish eggs.



The Incredible Edible Egg!

Shell – Outer covering of the egg, composed largely of calcium carbonate that provides protection to the rest of the egg.

Shell Membranes – Two paper-like membranes that are protective barriers against bacteria.

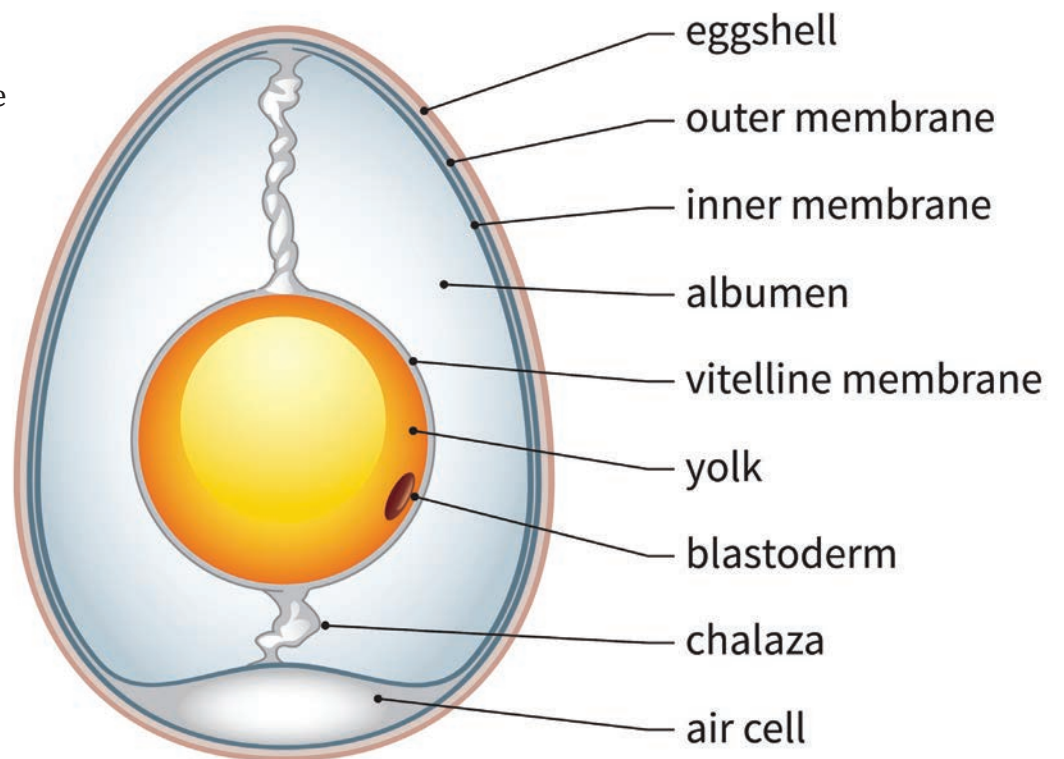
Albumen – Clear-like portion of the egg that is the major source of riboflavin and protein. It provides protein to the growing embryo and cushions the embryo during its development.

Yolk – Yellow portion of the egg. The yolk is a major source of vitamins, minerals and almost half of an egg's protein.

Blastoderm – Location in which an embryo will develop if the egg is fertilized.

Chalaza – Cord-like twisted strand in the albumen that anchors the yolk in the center of the egg.

Air Cell – Pocket of air formed at large end of the egg between the shell membranes that increases in size with age. This is caused by the contraction of the contents as the egg cools after laying.



Chicken Chat:

How table eggs are produced

Commercial laying hens live in cages inside a building called a laying house. Some houses can hold as many as 100,000 hens. The hens are given feed that contains corn, soybean meal, vitamins and minerals. Chickens only lay eggs if they are not stressed! This means that living in a cage does not stress them out. It actually keeps them comfortable and allows them to be fed individual diets and produce around 325 eggs per year. Farmers use automatic feeders and conveyor belts to make feeding and collecting eggs easier and quicker.



Alabama's top table egg-producing counties are Marshall, Cullman, Cherokee, Blount and Baldwin, with more than 1.7 million laying hens.

The Incredible Non-Edible Eggs!

Eggs are also an ingredient in some paints, shampoos, conditioners, animal feed and vaccines.

The United States raises around 264 million turkeys yearly. Each Thanksgiving, approximately 675 million pounds of turkey are consumed.

Female turkeys are called hens and males are called toms.



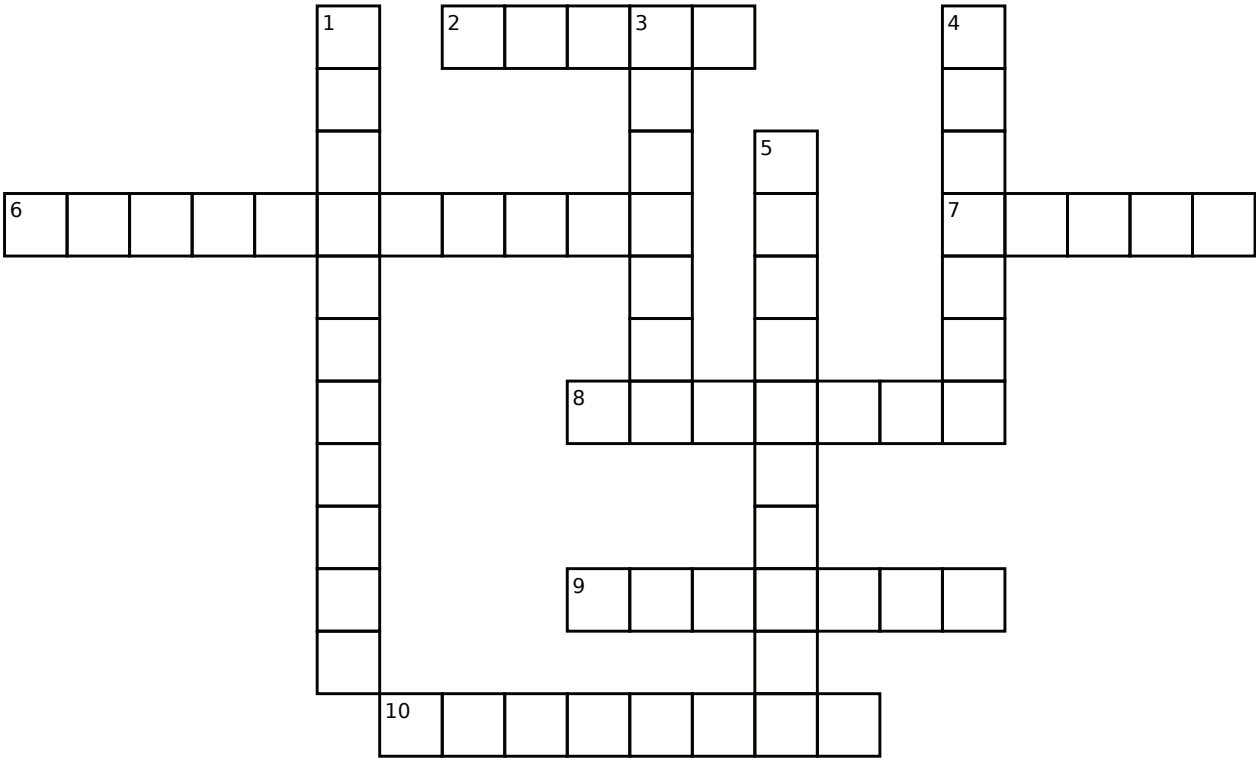
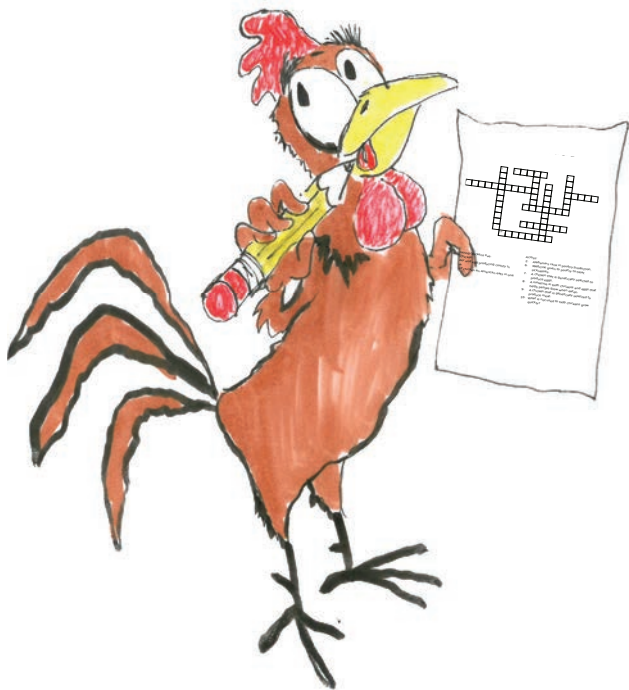
Some turkeys are raised outside, while others are raised in environmentally controlled barns where they can freely roam and be protected from predators, disease and bad weather.



Wild turkeys are different from domestic turkeys. Domestic turkeys are used for the meat we buy in the grocery store and usually have white feathers. Wild turkeys are larger and look more like the drawings seen at Thanksgiving.

Turkeys are fed a balanced diet of corn, soybean meal, vitamin and mineral supplements.

Chicken Crossword



- Down:
- 1. Where laying chickens live.
 - 3. A male chicken
 - 4. Top broiler and egg producing county in Alabama.
 - 5. Pounds of chicken an American eats in one year.

- Across:
- 2. Alabama’s rank in poultry production.
 - 6. Medicine given to poultry to treat sicknesses.
 - 7. A chicken that is genetically selected to produce eggs.
 - 8. A molecule in both chickens and eggs that helps people grow when eaten.
 - 9. A chicken that is genetically selected to produce meat.
 - 10. What is not used to help chickens grow quickly?

