

# Poultry

Information compiled by the California Poultry Federation

**How Produced** – Turkeys and chickens are raised on ranches throughout the state. Turkeys are the result of 18 months of careful effort. First, eggs are purchased from a “primary breeder” who specializes in producing superior genetic stock. In 28 days, they hatch into potential breeders. Those that pass a rigorous selection process are placed in a breeding program that produces market turkeys. After hatching, the turkeys are ready for market in four to five months.

Raising chickens for market is much faster. Incubation takes only 21 days. Eggs are placed in an incubator, located in a chick hatchery. After hatching, they are counted and graded before delivery to the customer's farm. There are two types of egg laying chickens: the meat-type breeder and the egg-type breeder. Chicks raised for meat are ready in 40 to 45 days. Hens kept for egg laying are kept in production for 44 to 60 weeks before being sold to market.

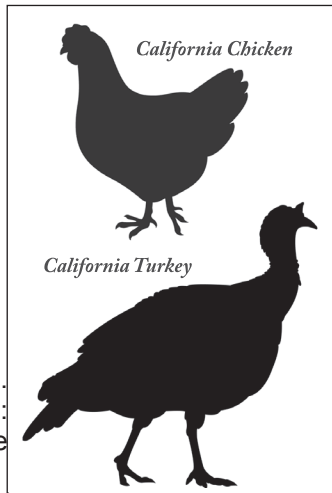
**History** – The first known domesticated poultry are believed to be the red jungle fowl, a member of the pheasant family, which lives in the forests and bamboo jungles of India and Southeast Asia. Jungle fowl were captured and kept for their eggs and for meat by about 2000 B.C. in Asia. It is thought that all domestic poultry in the world today are descended from this one species.

Over the past 100 years, poultry production has grown from backyard flocks and small, local businesses into highly efficient businesses. In the 1800s and early 1900s many families had backyard flocks for eggs and for meat. By the 20s and 30s, the broiler chicken evolved, and was raised specifically for its meat. In the 40s, 50s, and 60s, feed mills, hatcheries, farms, and processors were still all separately run businesses. Vertical integration began in the mid-1960s, meaning poultry businesses operated all aspects from growing chicks to transporting the finished product. In the late 60s and early 70s, television and media began to market chicken under brand names. Today, most California poultry is sold under a few family-owned farms.

**Varieties/Breeds** – More than 300 breeds of chickens exist but only a few are appropriate for meat-type commercial production. Common breeds include New Hampshire, White Plymouth Rock, Cornish, or hybrid strains developed by combining breeds to meet producers' needs.

Turkeys have roamed North and South America for 10 million years. Wild turkeys still exist but they are not very similar to

the tender, broad-breasted bird seen in the market. These birds weigh three and a half times as much as the wild turkeys eaten by the Pilgrims. Today's turkey consumes 30% less feed and requires one month less growing time to reach market weight than turkeys did 40 years ago. The most common commercial turkey comes from strains developed over the years to produce a white, broad-breasted turkey.



**Commodity Value** – The U.S. poultry industry produced chickens, turkeys, eggs, squab, and game birds for a combined value of more than \$100 billion. In California, this industry is valued at \$8 billion. In 2019, California chicken producers raised more than 275 million birds, which ranks California among the top 10 chicken producing states. California turkey producers raised more than 14

million birds ranking turkey within the top eight states. California is the top squab producing state. California chicken companies process more than 800,000 chickens per day and more than 760 different California chicken products are sold in supermarkets and grocery stores throughout the West.

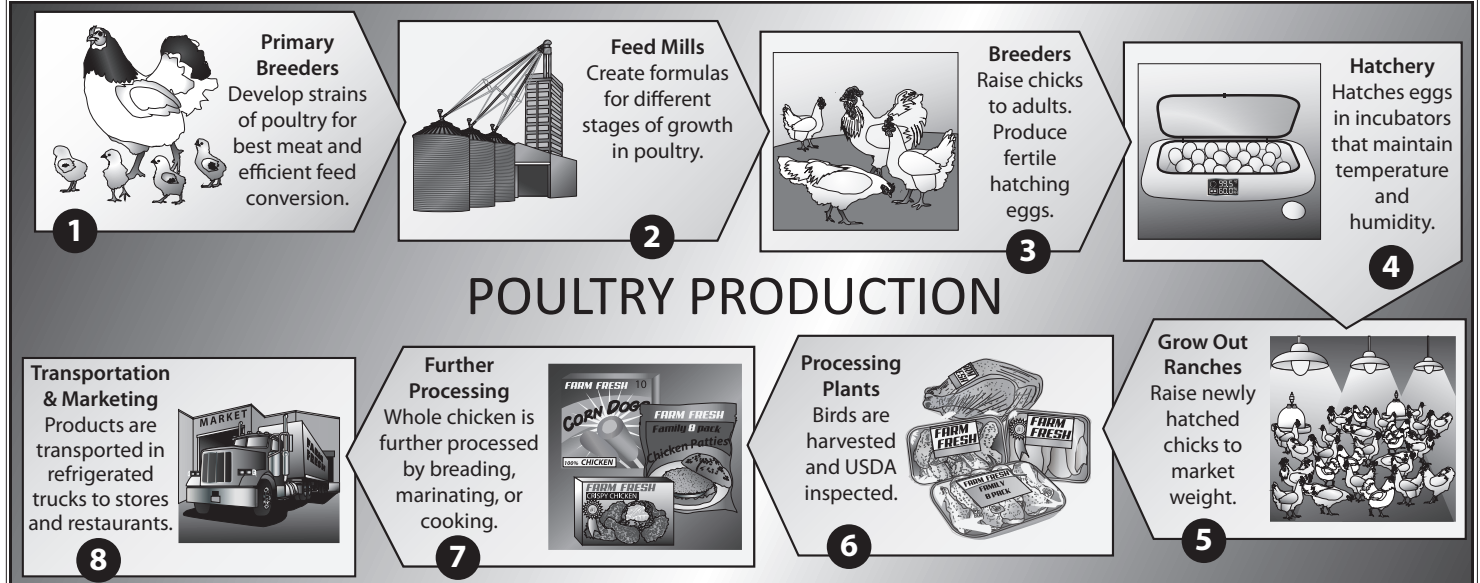
**Top Producing Counties** – The Central Valley is the primary poultry producing area. Fresno, Merced, Stanislaus, San Joaquin, and Sonoma are top producing counties for chicken. Stanislaus, Fresno, Merced, Kings, and San Joaquin are top producing counties for turkey. These rural areas allow room for ranches while allowing access to quick and economical transportation to market.

**Nutritional Value** – Poultry is in the protein food group and provides nutrients that are important for your body. Nutrients include B-vitamins (niacin, thiamin, riboflavin, and B-6), vitamin E, iron, zinc, and magnesium. Turkey and chicken are low in fat and calories while providing a high-protein meat source.

For Additional Information:  
California Poultry Federation  
(209) 576-6355  
cpif.org  
nationalchickencouncil.org  
eatturkey.com



# Poultry Activity Sheet



## Lesson Ideas

- Create a timeline and give a presentation on poultry history.
- Create a Jeopardy poultry game.
- Research and compare the nutritional value of poultry with other meats.
- Research and identify different breeds. Compare their qualities and create a card set.
- Create a Thanksgiving or poultry dinner meal, identify the origin of each food.
- Research and compare other vertically integrated businesses.
- Graph the production of broilers or turkeys month-by-month for a year and discuss how production reflects seasonal demand.

## Fantastic Facts

1. About 20,000 people work for California's poultry companies.
2. It takes about 10 pounds of feed to produce a five pound market-ready chicken.
3. California's poultry companies are all family-owned.
4. Foster Farms produces 700 million corn dogs per year.
5. Most corn dogs are made from chicken.
6. California consumers eat more chicken than any other state, more than 3.5 billion pounds per year. That's about 30 chickens per person!
7. Most chickens and turkeys are produced in California's Central Valley.
8. The chicken and turkey you eat today is thought to be descended from India and Southeast Asia.

## Lesson Plan: Taco Tuesday Taste Test

**Introduction:** Tacos can be a fun way for students to discuss the flavors of chicken and turkey. This lesson will allow students to have a taco party and learn along the way.

**Objective:** Students will work in groups to create an advertisement, calculate the cost of each taco, and conduct a taste test to determine the best ingredient combinations.

**California Standards:** CC ELA: SL.4.1, SL.5.1, 4, 5, SL.6-8.1, 4, 5, SL.9-12.1, 4; CC Math: 4.NBT.4, 5, 6; 5.NBT.5, 6, 7; 6.NS.2, 3; 7.NS.1, 3

**Materials:** Taco ingredients. (flour or corn tortillas, shredded or ground cooked turkey and chicken, grated cheese, sour cream, salsa, lettuce, tomatoes, and other selected ingredients) serving utensils, plates, napkins, large construction paper for advertisement posters, colored paper, markers, and scissors.

### Procedure:

1. Introduce the taco taste test with your class.  
Brainstorm popular ingredients to include in a taco. Students

sign up to bring different ingredients. Have students save all receipts and record costs on a classroom chart for all groups to use.

2. In groups, students compete to create the best taco, and calculate how much it costs per taco.
3. Have each group create and present a commercial for their taco.
4. Finish with a taste test competition to select the class favorite.
5. Additional ideas: students learn what food group each ingredient comes from, the serving size, and the nutritional value.

### Suggestions:

- Fill a corn tortilla with cooked ground turkey, shredded lettuce, diced tomatoes, shredded cheddar cheese, and sliced olives. Drizzle with favorite red or green salsa.
- Layer a flour tortilla with mashed black beans, shredded cooked chicken, shredded cheese, dollop of greek yogurt and favorite red or green salsa. Gently fold in half and enjoy!

