



# KIDS CONNECTION

## Birds of a Feather



Birds  
Birds  
Birds

## Poultry in Kansas

Cock-a-doodle-doo! **Poultry are domesticated birds** like chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, quail and pheasants. Most poultry in the United States are raised for meat and eggs. Poultry provides us with nutritious and delicious foods like fried chicken, scrambled eggs and the turkey we eat at Thanksgiving. Their feathers provide stuffing for our pillows, too! **There are more than 25 billion chickens in the world.** That's more chickens than people!

### Word Bank

Rooster  
Hens  
Tom  
Ducklings  
Gander  
80  
Broilers  
Hatchery  
Goslings  
Beak  
Poults  
Chicks

### Fun Fact!

A bird's beak is made of the same tough protein found in fingernails, hooves, antlers and horns.

## Poultry Terms

Adult female birds produce eggs. Each egg is covered in a protective shell. Over \_\_\_ billion chicken eggs are produced each year in the United States, some right here in Kansas! In fact, most chicken eggs arrive at the local store within a week after being laid.

Fertilized poultry eggs are often incubated in a \_\_\_\_\_. When it is time to hatch, the young bird breaks the shell with its \_\_\_\_\_. Young chickens, pheasants and quail are called \_\_\_\_\_ but young turkeys are called \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ are young geese and \_\_\_\_\_ are young ducks.

Most adult female poultry birds are called \_\_\_\_\_ while adult male poultry have different names, such as \_\_\_\_\_ or cock (chicken or pheasant), \_\_\_\_\_ (turkey), drake (duck) or \_\_\_\_\_ (goose). \_\_\_\_\_ are chickens raised for meat. Laying hens are chickens raised for egg production.

Answers:  
1. 80 2. Hatchery 3. Beak 4. Chicks 5. Poults 6. Goslings  
7. Ducklings 8. Hens 9. Rooster 10. Tom 11. Gander 12. Broilers





Which came first?  
*The chicken or  
the egg?*



or



**Hens lay eggs.** If the eggs are fertilized, the hen will sit on them for 21 days until the eggs hatch. This is known as the incubation period. If the eggs are not fertilized and are collected before the hen sits on them, they are processed, cleaned and packaged for distribution to consumers.

When the young chick hatches, it will become an adult after only three months. After chicks are hatched, they start out in a pen. Some will become laying hens and others will become broiler chickens, raised for meat production. Laying hens can live from five to six years.

**Hens can lay up to 300 eggs each year!**

Chicken eggs can be white, brown, blue and even pink. Egg color is determined by the breed of hen. Leghorn chickens lay white eggs, while Orpington chickens lay brown eggs.



**WELCOME  
TO MY  
COOP!**



### Fun Fact!

Chickens have no teeth and they can store food in their crop (an expandable pouch near the throat) for up to 12 hours!

## What do poultry eat?

Chickens, geese and turkeys are all **omnivores**. This means they eat both plants and insects.

Laying hens are fed a healthy diet that includes grains like corn or grain sorghum, soybean meal and vitamins and minerals. Their stomachs contain gizzards, which are tiny stones that help to grind up the food they swallow. **Chickens need a complete and balanced diet** so they can stay healthy and lay healthy eggs.

**crop**



# More than Scrambled Eggs!



In addition to poultry providing meat and eggs for us to eat, they also provide us with other products. The **feathers** from geese, chickens and turkeys can be used to make **diapers, plastics, paper and insulation for houses and campers**. The four million feathers produced each year by the United States poultry industry are also used for keeping your **pillows** fluffy and your **winter jackets** stuffed.

## Poultry Homes

There are several housing options for raising poultry. Chicken farmers with smaller numbers of chickens typically keep laying hens in a **coop** where they can easily sit on their eggs and have access to plenty of food and water. On larger farms, laying hens live in **large, open houses**.

Broiler chickens and turkeys live in large, open structures known as **growhouses**. These buildings have the ability to mechanically deliver feed and water to the birds and provide a lot of fresh air for them. **Keeping** birds and hens in enclosed buildings helps keep predators away.

### Fun Fact

Eggs are a significant source of protein. One large egg provides varying amounts of 13 essential vitamins and minerals!

## EGGsperiment at home! The Naked Egg

**You Need**  
1. 1 Raw Egg    2. Tall glass    3. Vinegar

1. Gently place an egg in the glass and pour in enough vinegar to completely cover the egg.
2. Allow the egg to sit in the glass for 24 hours then drain the vinegar from the glass.
3. Cover the egg with fresh vinegar. Allow the egg to sit in the glass for 7 days. Observe results (hint: look for bubbles on the shell!).
4. When the week is over, pour out the vinegar from the glass and rinse the egg with water. The egg shell will be completely gone!



Visit the American Egg Board website for more fun facts and activities all about eggs!  
[www.aeb.org](http://www.aeb.org)



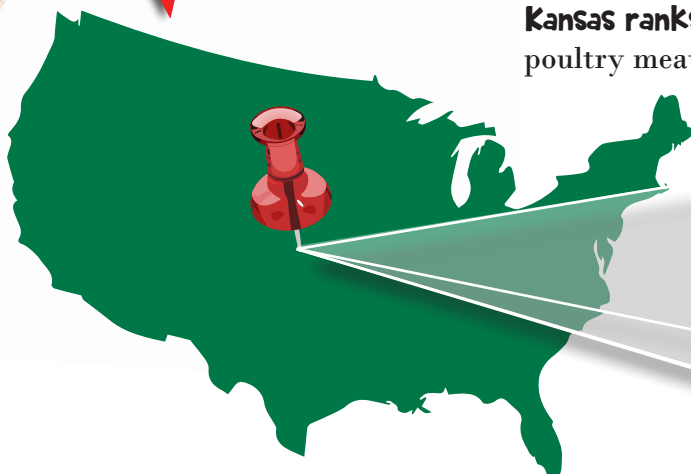


You can visit  
an egg farm right from  
your classroom! Visit  
[www.aeb.org/educators/farm-to-table-virtual-field-trips](http://www.aeb.org/educators/farm-to-table-virtual-field-trips)  
to take a tour!

# Kansas Economy

Many Kansans have jobs in the **poultry industry**. Those jobs include raising birds, hatching the eggs, and working in poultry and egg processing plants across the state.

**Kansas ranks 34th in the nation** in terms of egg and poultry meat sales.



## Careers in the Poultry Industry: Directions You Can Take



**Nutritionist** – make sure the animals have a well-balanced diet.

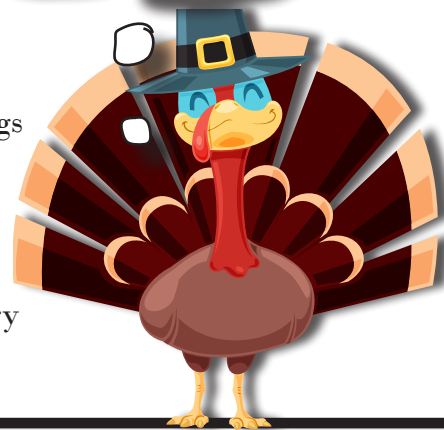
**Poultry farmer** – raises chickens, turkeys or other poultry and keep them healthy to produce meat and eggs.

**Hatchery assistant** – rotates and checks incubating eggs regularly while waiting for the chicks to hatch.

**Biosecurity agent** – works to regulate visitors of poultry farms and set up guidelines for large-scale poultry farms. This helps to ensure humans and poultry are safe and healthy.

### Fun Fact!

During Thanksgiving in the United States we eat about 675 million pounds of turkey.



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Learn more about Kansas  
agriculture at  
[www.ksagclassroom.org](http://www.ksagclassroom.org).

