



LIVESTOCK

MOSES ORGANIC FACT SHEET

Organic Poultry Production: Meat

The market for organic poultry products is vibrant and expanding.

There are opportunities for small-scale growers to market through various direct-to-consumer venues. Growers in larger operations may sell through a diversity of marketing agencies. Before you get very far in your planning, research your markets to ensure your buyers can accommodate additional producers and clarify any special production requirements (large breasted breeds, heirloom breeds, basic or specialty feeds).

- **Organic poultry may be grown starting from conventional day-old chicks, poults (young turkeys), ducklings etc.** Parent stock need not be organically produced, conventional hatcheries may be utilized.

- **Birds must be treated organically from the second day of life** including organic feed, housing and the use of only allowed health treatments.

- **Organic poultry must have access to the outdoors**, as seasonally appropriate. Outdoor areas need not have green vegetation, however, grass fed poultry can be a selling factor in some markets and is claimed by some to produce healthier birds and better tasting poultry products. Any land the birds have access to must be certified organic.

- **Feed** must be either purchased as certified organic or produced on your own certified organic farm. Any agricultural products in feed or feed supplements must be organic, this includes secondary ingredients such as soy oil

or wheat middlings. Non-agricultural, natural ingredients, such as kelp, grit, calcium, or fishmeal must be approved for use in organic operations. No synthetic preservatives, colors, flowing agents or dust suppressants are allowed. Feed may not include mammalian or poultry slaughter byproducts. Adding flax meal to your ration can increase the presence of Omega 3 fatty acids in the eggs.

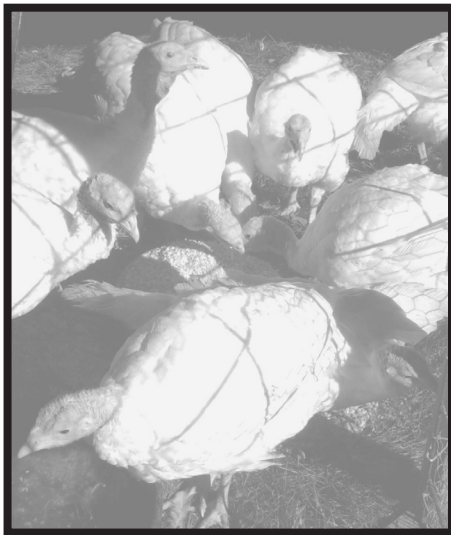
- **Hormones or antibiotics are not allowed** in organic meat production. Medicated feed may not be fed. Health issues should be treated through prevention, as most poultry diseases are very difficult to treat. Cleanliness is the best form of defense in disease management.

- **Farm biosecurity** is very important for preventing transfer of diseases; from farm to farm, from wild birds to domestic and from one batch of poultry to another. When working with multiple flocks on your farm, move from young to old and not visa-versa.



Any operation selling \$5,000 or more in organic product per year must be certified.

- **Vaccines** are allowed, although mostly used in larger operations. Typical vaccines that may be considered include: newcastle disease, coccidiosis, MG M. gallisepticum and MS M. synoviae. Vaccines may be administered



via water, through the air or orally. Healthcare alternatives include vinegar in water, or tumeric added to food for coccidiosis, homeopathy, probiotics, herbs, hydrogen

peroxide. For more information see ATTRA resources.

- **Cannibalism** may be caused by overcrowding or ration imbalance. Correct these conditions to reduce the problem. Poultry will peck at bloody spots, if an bird is injured it should be isolated from others.

- **Predators** are often a significant factor for small-scale poultry production. Predators can include raccoons, dogs, fox, coyotes, mink, weasels, opossums, rats, aerial predators, including owls and hawks. Poisons are not allowed. Common control methods include the use of tight structures, electric net fencing, guard animals and flashing lights.

- **Housing** must allow exercise, freedom of movement and reduction of stress. Stationary houses, moveable pens or moveable houses may be used.

- **If bedding is used during brooding or housing**, it must be certified organic if it is something that the poultry will typically consume (i.e. hay). Typical bedding may be wood shavings (not from treated wood), organic corncobs, organic hay or straw or organic corn fodder.

- **Processing** of meat birds must take place in a certified organic processing facility. Those processing on-farm (allowed in some states in limited numbers- check with state Department of Agriculture) may butcher and sell organic poultry if their processing operation is included in their farm plan, inspection and organic certification.

- **Documentation.** Records must be kept on: source of poultry, feed and supplement use and sources, use and source of any health products, vaccinations, mortalities, outside access, house sanitation practices between flocks, sale of finished product.

- **Certification.** Any operation selling \$5,000 or more in organic product per year must be certified. You must contact an independent third party certification agency, fill out a farm plan, and have an annual inspection. For more information see the MOSES "Guidebook for Organic Certification" or fact sheet series on certification.

- **Marketing.** Those following the National Organic Program may label their poultry as "organic." Labeling and packaging must meet organic and state labeling regulations. The USDA organic seal may be used, the certifiers name must be on the package.

- **More info** on small-scale poultry production can be found from ATTRA www.attra.org and from the American Pastured Poultry Producers Association, www.apppa.org.

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Visit www.mosesorganic.org for more resources and tools, including our Organic Resource Directory and the Organic Broadcaster Newspaper. Plan to attend our annual Organic Farming Conference in February. To find upcoming events including MOSES trainings and field days visit our web calendar at: www.mosesorganic.org/events.html