

4-H MARKET POULTRY CARE, SHOWMANSHIP, AND SELECTION

Cornell Cooperative Extension | Livingston County

Cornell Cooperative Extension is an equal opportunity, affirmative action educator and employer



CARING FOR YOUR MARKET POULTRY

■ **Brooding**

- Chicks should be housed in a brooder area – a small space intended to keep the chicks near the heat, food, and water – until they are 7 days old
- The brooding area should be kept at a temperature of 92-95 degrees.
 - Decrease the temperature of the pen by 5 degrees every week until you reach 65-70 degrees
- At 7 days old you may allow the chicks to have access to the entire pen

■ **Lighting**

- For maximum growth, provide 24 hours of natural or artificial light
 - This will increase weight gain and improve feathering

■ **Water**

- Provide fresh, clean water at all times
 - This will increase feed intake and increase weight gain
 - Be sure to clean the waterer!!!

FEEDING YOUR MARKET POULTRY

Table 1: Broiler feeding schedule

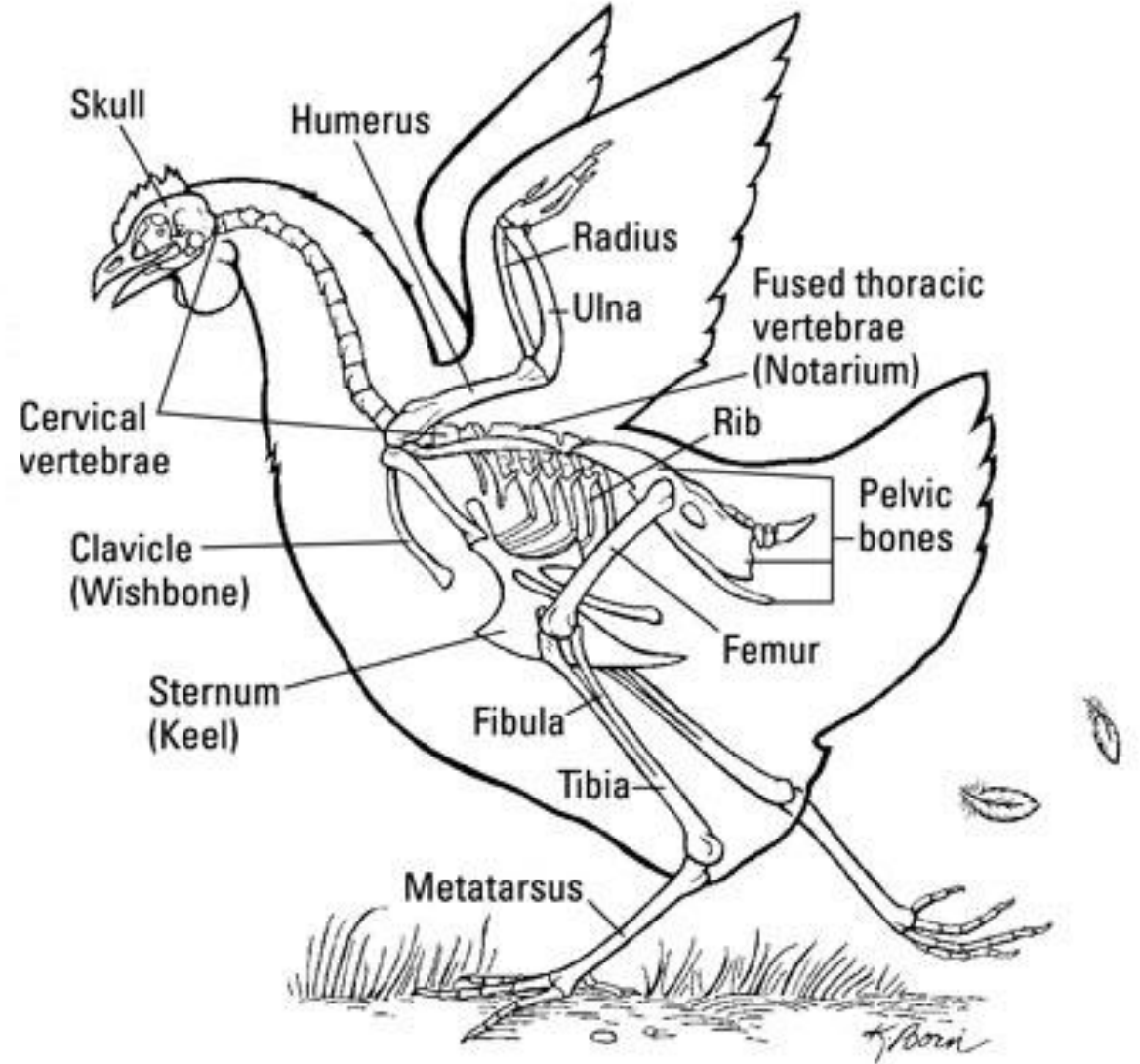
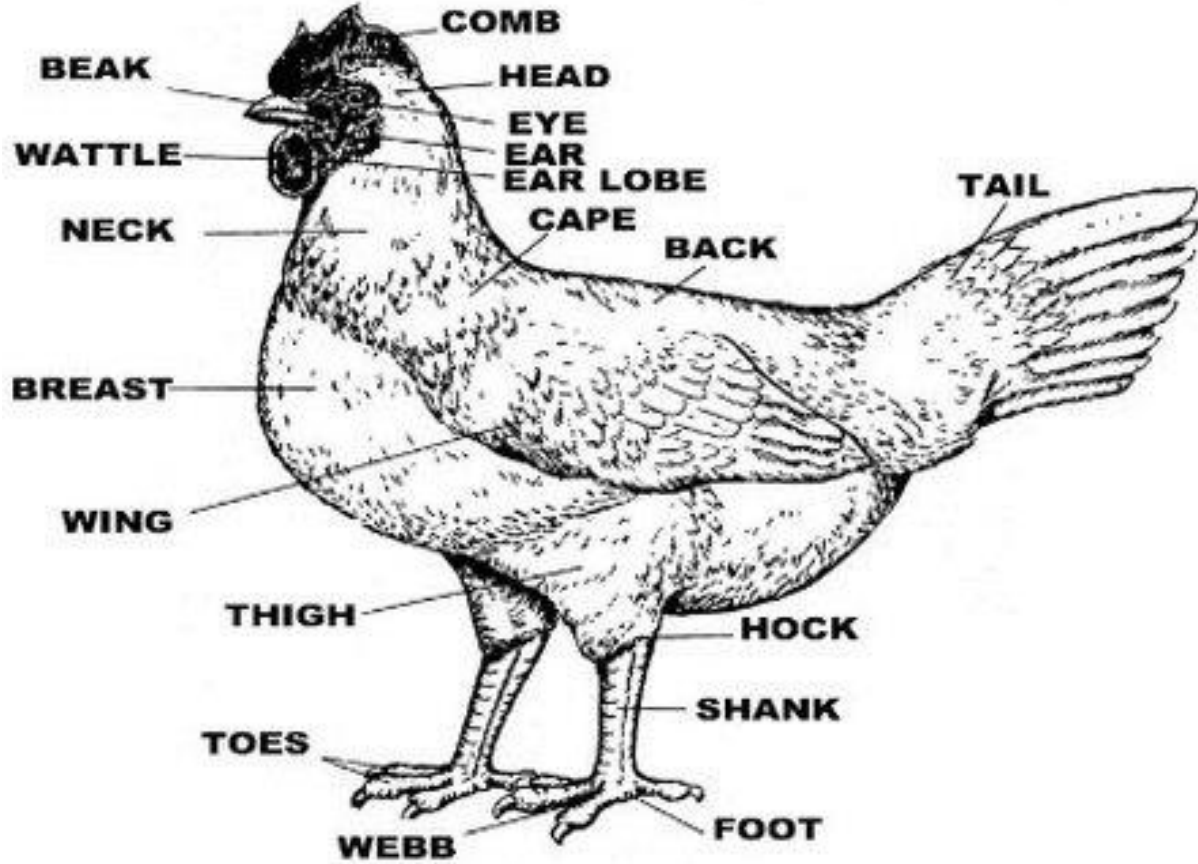
Feed type	Length of feeding period	Approximate number of bags of feed*
Turkey starter crumble	First 10 days	3–4 bags per 100 birds
Broiler starter pellet	Days 10–28	10–12 bags per 100 birds
Broiler finisher pellet	Days 28–until show	14–15 bags per 100 birds

Table 2: Broiler feeding schedule

Feed type	Length of feeding period	Approximate number of bags of feed*
Turkey starter crumble	First 12 days	3–4 bags per 100 birds
Turkey starter pellet	Days 12–16	4 bags per 100 birds
Broiler starter pellet	Days 16–24	6–7 bags per 100 birds
Broiler finisher pellet	Days 24–until show	14–15 bags per 100 birds

- The table above gives you 2 different options for feeding your market poultry
- You may also choose to feed Broiler Starter (Chick Starter) from day 1
- Market poultry should be fed a complete feed (grain) throughout your entire project

PARTS OF A CHICKEN



EVALUATING BODY CONFIRMATION

- **Width Across Shoulders**
 - Wing to wing
 - This length should be 75% of the length of the back
- **Length of Back**
 - Base of the neck to the base of the tail
 - This length should be 1.5 times greater than the width across the shoulders
- **Depth of Body**
 - Backbone to keel bone
 - This length should equal or exceed the width across the shoulders, at both the front and rear of the keel bone
 - Making the keel bone parallel to the back
- **Length of Keel**
 - This length should be equal to or greater than the width across the shoulders
- **Spring of Ribs**
 - Width across the back between the hips and wings
 - This length should be equal to the width across the shoulders
- **Width Across the Hips**
 - This length should exceed the width across the shoulders

EVALUATING FLESHING (DISTRIBUTION OF MUSCLE)

- **Length of Muscling**

- The length of the breast muscle is determined by the length of the keel bone. The muscle should extend through the entire length of the keel bone.
 - The length of the breast muscle should be 1.5 times greater than the width of the muscle

- **Depth of Muscling**

- The depth of the breast muscle should be equal (or greater) to the depth of body (amount of space between the keel bone and spine)

- **Width of Muscling**

- This is determined by the width of the breast and should remain consistent from the top of the breast to the bottom

- **Carry of Muscling**

- The width of the breast muscle should carry throughout the entire muscle
 - The width of the breast muscle should be the same from the top of the breast to the bottom

QUICK TIPS FOR SELECTING YOUR PAIR OF MARKET BIRDS

- **Uniformity is key!!!**
 - Both birds should be as close to the same size/weight as possible
 - Both birds should also have similar fleshing
- **Evaluate your birds!**
 - Pick up your bird and handle them. You cannot properly evaluate your bird without handling them!
 - Watch the video on the next slide for handling instructions
 - Choose the birds with a breast muscle that is long, deep, and wide
- **Pick 2 males OR 2 females**
 - NOT one of each
- **Make sure their combined weight will fall within the auction weight requirements**
 - 10-26lbs
 - Ideally, one live bird should weigh 7-8lbs when weighed at fair



*****Please note that you will be exhibiting a Pen of TWO Market Birds*****

<https://youtu.be/-N2ynGG4yPU>

PREPARING YOUR ANIMAL FOR SHOW

- **Check your birds for lice and mites!**
 - Each bird will be health check before entering the barn at fair. If your bird has mites or lice it will be sent home
 - If you treat your bird, you MUST follow the product withdrawal times!!!
- **Wash your birds!**
 - Birds should be washed at home prior to coming to the fair
 - This will also help with removing external parasites
 - You may have to wash your bird(s) again before the show. Just make sure they are completely dry before the start of the show
- **Make sure their pen is clean at all times**
 - The birds are typically judged right at their cage so be sure it is clean and presentable



Getting Birds Ready for a Show

<https://youtu.be/lgg4YAggzwo>

SHOWMANSHIP




<https://youtu.be/BZ7eLNYC8k4>

SHOWMANSHIP TIPS & TRICKS

- **Depending on the judge, you may or may not be required to handle your bird during showmanship**
 - Be prepared to handle your bird! Don't assume you won't need to because last years judge only asked questions
 - Your bird should be clean, in good condition, and be tame/manageable
- **A big portion of broiler showmanship is your knowledge of your birds and project!**
 - You should know general breed information
 - Be able to correctly name the cuts of meat
 - Be able to identify strong and weak points of the animal
 - Be able to give the gender, weight, and age of the animal

SHOWMANSHIP TIPS & TRICKS

- **You should also be able to tell the judge specifics on raising your birds**
 - What and how much you fed
 - Protein and fat percentages
 - Where they were raised
 - Any issues you had throughout the project

- 
- **Don't forget to fill out the educational requirement and auction advertisement paperwork!**
 - **If you have any further questions please contact:**
 - Mark Wittmeyer
 - mjwl6@cornell.edu | 585-991-5420 | 585-335-1752
 - Jenn Schwab
 - jls669@cornell.edu | 585-991-5420 | 585-335-1752