



Turkey Fun Facts

IOWA HISTORY

Iowa's 85 turkey growers raise over 8,750,000 turkeys and are processing over 238,000,000 pounds of turkey meat per year. Turkey is truly America's meat. Fossils have proven that wild turkeys have been part of North America for more than 10 million years! There were seven varieties of wild turkeys that were in America when Europeans first arrived over 500 years ago, and all seven varieties still exist in the wild today.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Over 75% of all turkeys raised in Iowa are raised by independent farm families. Their farms have a substantial economic impact on their local communities since the majority of their inputs are purchased locally.

Iowa has three turkey processing plants. Two rank within the top 20 turkey processing plants in the United States.

- 7th - Sara Lee Foods, Storm Lake
- 16th - West Liberty Foods, West Liberty (also plants in Signorey and Mt. Pleasant)
- AgriProcessors, Postville

Combined Iowa turkey processors process over 499,000,000 pounds of turkey annually, or about 16.5 million turkeys, which ranks Iowa in the top five turkey processing states in the US. Estimated value of turkey production in Iowa from farm to ready-to-cook, at wholesale is \$141,000,000. The economic value of Iowa's turkey production on just the farm is over \$78,500,000.

Economic value per turkey is about \$16.00. (Farm - processing)

PRODUCTION

- A newly hatched turkey is called a poult.
- A female turkey is called a hen and a male turkey is called a tom.
- Only the tom turkeys gobble, hens make a clicking noise.
- A group of turkeys is called a flock.
- A hen can lay 90 -110 eggs in their 25 week production cycle.
- Turkey eggs are slightly larger than jumbo chicken eggs.
- It takes 28 days for a turkey egg to hatch.
- It takes about 14 weeks for a hen and 18 weeks for a tom to grow to market weight.
- The average weight of a tom is 35 pounds and a hen is 23 pounds.
- It is estimated that turkeys have approximately 3,500 feathers at maturity.
- In a turkey's lifetime, they consume approximately one bushel of corn and 1/3 bushel of soybeans.

The anatomy of a turkey.

Snood - red, violet, blue covering on top of the head and hanging off the beak

Wattle - the colored appendage on the neck

Beard - a black lock of hair found on the chest of a male turkey