

Poultry Breeds

Poultry Breeds – Study Notes

1. Overview

- **Poultry** = domesticated birds kept for meat, eggs, feathers, or as show/ornamental birds.
- Main species: **chicken, turkey, duck, goose, guinea fowl, quail, pheasant**.
- Breeds are developed for specific traits: production (meat, eggs), climate adaptability, temperament, appearance, or dual-purpose (meat+egg).

2. Chicken Breeds

Category	Primary Purpose	Representative Breeds	Key Characteristics
Layer	High egg output (260-320 eggs/yr)	Leghorn, White Plymouth Rock, ISA Brown, Hy-Line Brown	Efficient feed-to-egg conversion, early onset of lay (~18 wk), often white or brown eggs
Broiler	Fast growth for meat (5-7 lb in 6-8 wk)	Cornish-Cross, Ross 308, Cobb 500	Broad breast, rapid feed intake, high feed conversion ratio (FCR ~1.6–1.8)
Dual-Purpose	Moderate meat & egg production	Rhode Island Red, Plymouth Rock, Sussex, New Hampshire	Good egg numbers (200-250 yr) and decent carcass size; hardy and adaptable
Heritage / Traditional	Preservation of historic genetics, often slower growth	Dominique, Black Bantam, Old English Game, Dorking	Longer laying period, better for free-range, strong foragers
Ornamental / Show	Aesthetic traits, exhibition	Silkie, Polish, Frizzle, Sultan	Unique feathering, crests, feathered feet; not production-focused
Specialty	Specific market niches (e.g., high omega-3 eggs)	Araucana (blue/green eggs), Marans (dark brown eggs)	Egg color or other niche traits

Poultry Breeds

2.1. Selection Criteria for Commercial Operations

1. **Production metrics** – egg count, body weight gain, feed conversion.
2. **Health & disease resistance** – susceptibility to Marek's disease, coccidiosis.
3. **Climate tolerance** – feathering, heat?stress resistance.
4. **Behavior** – docility for handling, flock uniformity.

2.2. Conservation Breeds

- **American Poultry Association (APA) Standard of Perfection** lists over 500 recognized breeds.
 - Conservation status (FAO/USDA) ranges from **Critical** (e.g., Red Jersey) to **Secure** (e.g., Leghorn).
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3. Turkey Breeds

Breed	Primary Use	Weight (male/female)	Notable Traits
Broad?Breasted? White	Commercial meat	30–40?lb / 15–20? lb	Fast growth, large breast, white feathers (no dark pinfeathers)
Broad?Breasted? Bronze	Heritage meat	28–38?lb / 14–18? lb	Dark meat, strong flavor, good for free? range
Narragansett	Dual?purpose	20–25?lb / 12–15? lb	Dark plumage, good for small farms
Royal?Palm	Ornamental	12–15?lb / 8–10? lb	Long, curved tail; prized in shows
Black?Turkey	Meat		