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# Introduction to Raising Heritage Poultry



- PRESENTED BY -

Jeannette Beranger  
The Livestock Conservancy

- HOSTED BY -

**FACT**  
Food Animal Concerns Trust

# Introductions



**Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT)** is a national nonprofit organization that works to ensure that all food-producing animals are raised in a humane and healthy manner.



**Larissa McKenna & Samantha Gasson**

FACT's Humane Farming Program Team

**Email Larissa:** [lmckenna@foodanimalconcerns.org](mailto:lmckenna@foodanimalconcerns.org)

**Email Sam:** [sgasson@foodanimalconcerns.org](mailto:sgasson@foodanimalconcerns.org)

**Website:** [foodanimalconcernstrust.org/farmer](http://foodanimalconcernstrust.org/farmer)

## **FACT's services to support livestock and poultry farmers include:**

- **Humane Farming Mentorship Program** (*applications due December 31*)
- **Fund-a-Farmer Grants** (*applications available next week*)
- **Conference scholarships** (ongoing)
- **Customized handouts** (ongoing)
- **Free webinars** (ongoing)

# Introduction to Raising Heritage Poultry



By Jeannette Beranger  
Senior Programs Manager



**THE LIVESTOCK  
CONSERVANCY™**

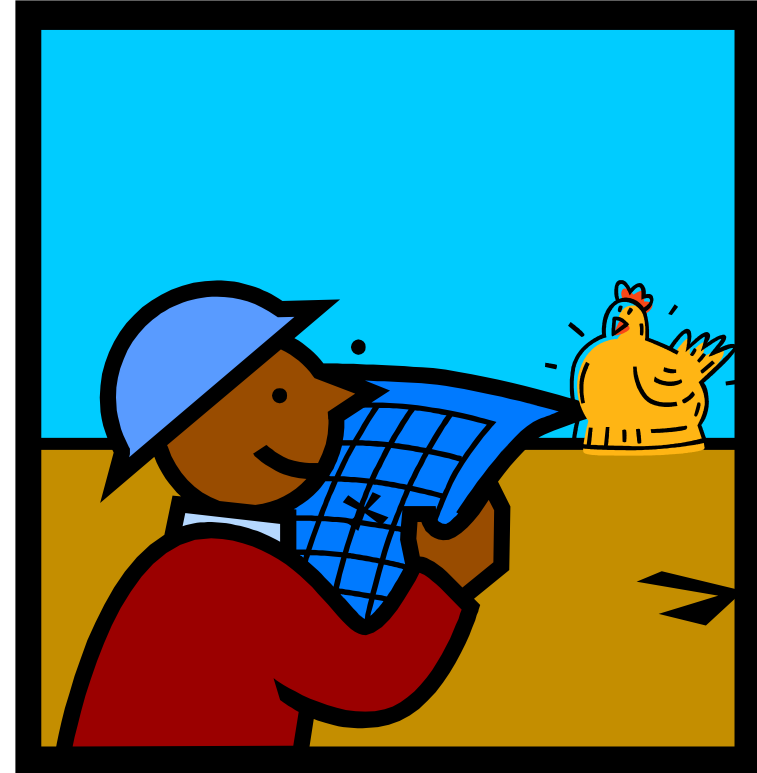
# What are your production needs?

- Eggs only?
- Meat from non layers?
- Dual purpose breed?
- Maintain a breeding flock?
- Natural or artificial incubation?



# Start with a plan!

- Do you have the space?
- Do you have the know how?
- What is your market?
- Where will the birds be processed?
- Where will you get chicks?



Take advantage of learning from others *before* you begin!

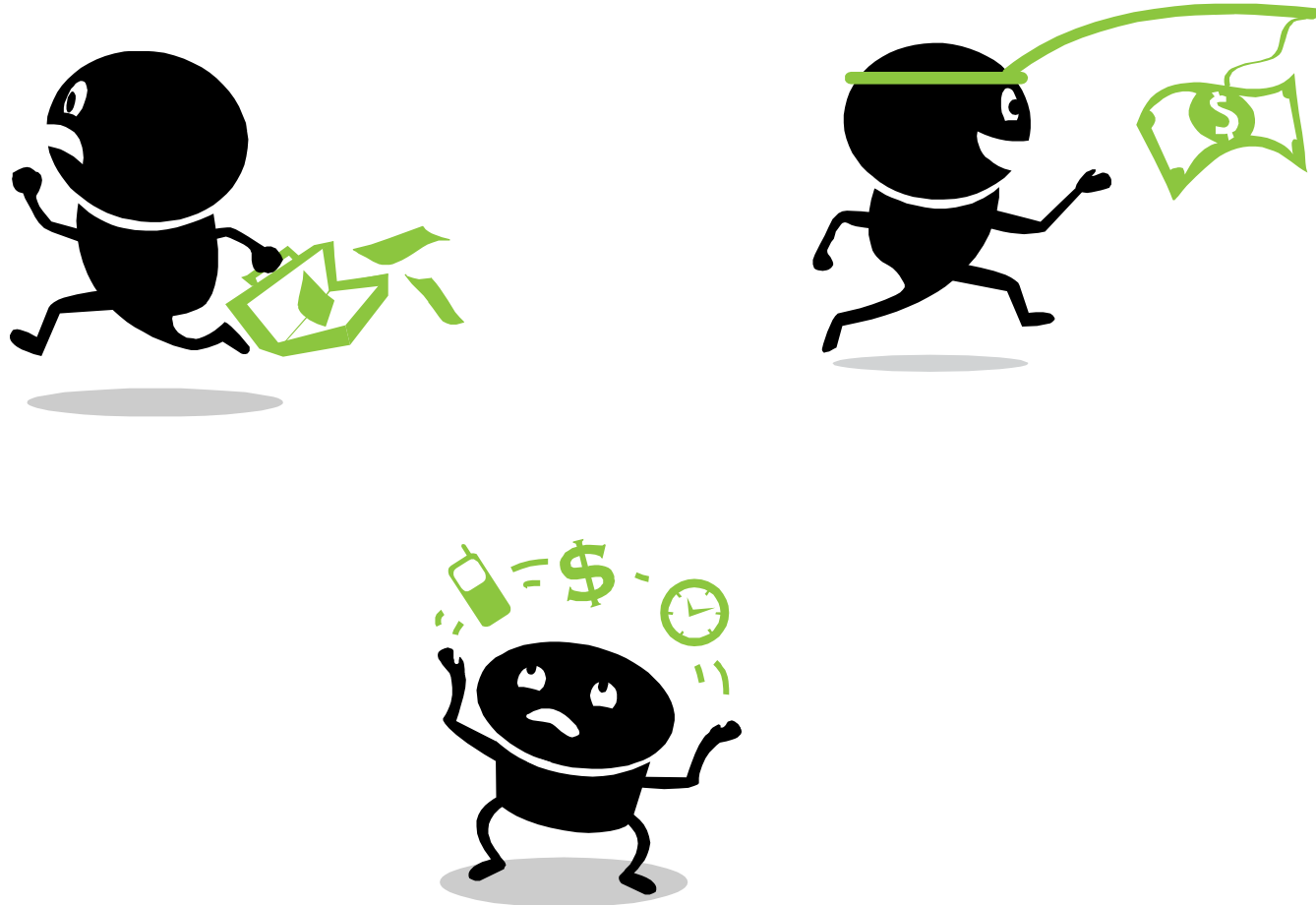
# Set Realistic Goals



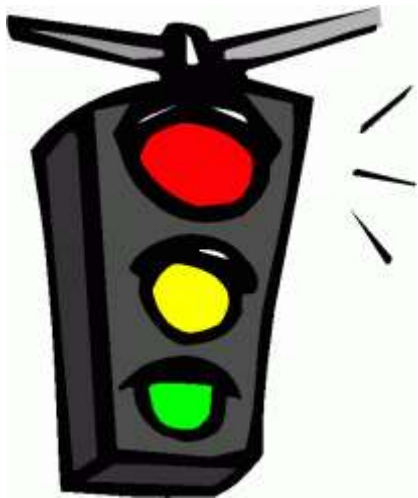
VS



# Does it make economic sense?



# Choose an Enterprise Model That Works for You



**Competitive** – enterprise competes for resources (land, labor, money) with existing farm ventures

**Complementary** – enterprise adds to another when resources are limited

**Supplementary**- enterprise does not compete or add to another



# Chickens



- many breeds geared for both meat & egg production
- excellent foragers & adaptable to many climates
- chicks can be somewhat easy to challenging to raise depending on the breed
- excellent for insect control
- meat sales good but a challenge to be profitable on meat alone

# Body Type



White Leghorn



White Plymouth Rock

# Commercial vs Heritage

## Benefits of Commercial Strains

### Animals

- Rapid growth and high production rate
- Early maturity to market weight

### Farmers

- Production of large quantities of food for growing global populations
- Larger profits in a shorter period of time

# Commercial Broilers

Some strains can reach market weight in 6-8 weeks!



Cornish Cross Commercial Broilers

# Colored Commercial Broilers

These reach  
market weight  
in 9-11 weeks



Freedom Rangers

# Commercial Layers



Starts to lay at 19 weeks

Lays average of 259+ eggs



Commercial Leghorn Hybrids

# Colored Commercial Layers



Starts to lay at 22 weeks

Lays average of 230-250 eggs



Black Star Commercial Layers

# The Down Side of Commercial Birds

## For Animals

- Decrease of genetic diversity
- Decrease of natural resistance to health problems
- Fertility decline & shorter productive lifespan
- Loss of ability to thrive in challenging environments

## For Farmers

- Veterinary costs are higher
- Increased time, materials and labor needed for livestock care
- Added expense for replacement stock

### Tyson blames underperforming roosters for US chicken shortage

By Jill Pease

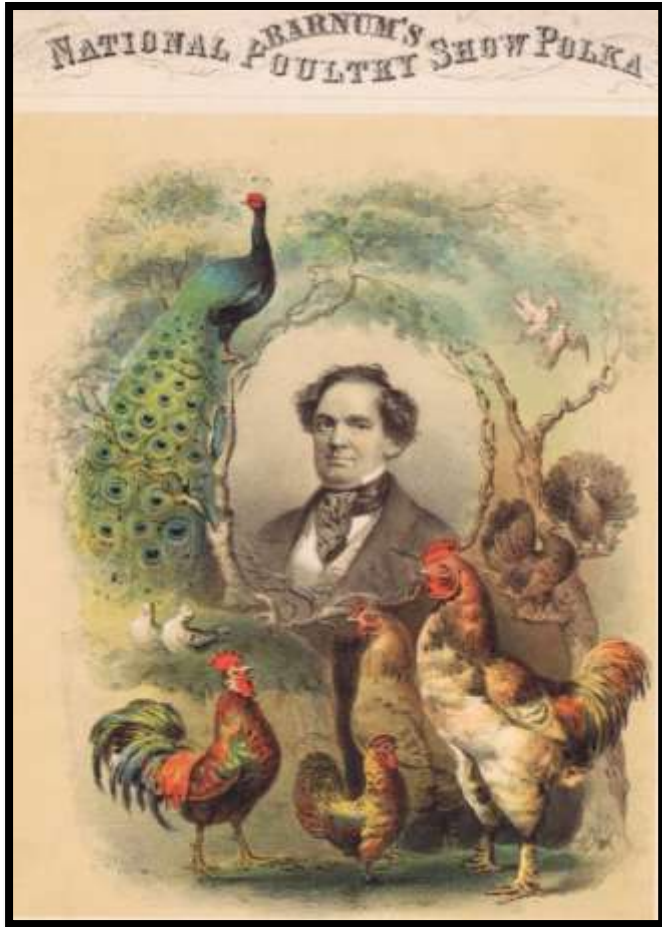
Mar 10, 2011 | 1:01pm | [comment](#)



Low stocking shelves have prompted all chicken suppliers



# What is a Heritage Bird?



*Poster celebrating Barnum's famous poultry expo of 1854*



1. Has a long history in the US
2. Breeds naturally
3. Thrives outdoors and on pasture
4. Has a long natural lifespan
5. Comes from purebred parent and grandparent stock

# Not All Chickens Are Equal

## Crève-cœur



Hatchery stock vs buying from long time breeder

# Chicken Breeds



Leghorn

150-300 eggs / year

4-5 lbs

# Chicken Breeds



Australorp

250-300 eggs / year

5.5-7.5 lbs

# Chicken Breeds

Buckeye

150-160 eggs / year

5 ½ - 9 lbs



# Chicken Breeds



Rhode Island White

200-230 eggs / year

6.5-8.5 lbs

# Chicken Breeds

## Langshan

150-160 eggs / year

6 ½ to 8 lbs



# Ducks



- many breeds geared for both meat & egg production
- excellent foragers adaptable to challenging climates, especially cold and wet
- ducklings are robust & easy to raise
- excellent for aquatic plant, slug, & snail control
- egg & meat sales can be strong but finding processors and customers may be a challenge to start



# Commercial Ducks

Pekin

Market weight  
7 lbs (live weight)  
in 6 weeks!



# Duck Breeds



Saxony

190-240 eggs / year

8-9 lbs

# Duck Breeds



Runner

200+ eggs / year

4-4.5 lbs

# Duck Breeds



Appleyard

200-270 eggs / year

8-9 lbs

# Duck Breeds



Ancona

210-280 eggs / year

6-6.5 lbs

# Duck Breeds



Khaki Campbell

250-340 eggs / year

4-4.5 lbs

# Duck Breeds



Welsh Harlequin

240-330 eggs / year

5-5.5 lbs

# Geese



- Primarily geared for meat production
- Excellent foragers adaptable to challenging climates, especially cold & wet
- Goslings are robust and easy to raise
- Excellent for grass cutting and aquatic plant control
- Holiday meat sales are strong but finding processors may be a challenge



# Commercial Geese

Embden Geese

20-26 lbs



# Goose Breeds



American Buff

16-18 lbs

# Goose Breeds



Toulouse

20-26 lbs

# Weeder Geese



Cotton Patch

9-12 lbs

# Best Laying Geese



Chinese

40-100 eggs / year

10-12 lbs

# Turkeys



- primarily geared for meat production
- excellent foragers adaptable to most climates
- poults can be delicate to raise
- best to not raise near chickens
- excellent for insect control
- holiday meat sales is strong

# Commercial Turkeys



## Broad Breasted Bronze

- This is **not** a Heritage turkey
- Cannot mate naturally
- Dependent on AI for reproduction

# Turkey Breeds



Standard Bronze

20-36 lbs



# Turkey Breeds

Black

18-33 lbs



# Turkey Breeds



Bourbon Red

18-33 lbs

# Best Layer of Turkey Breeds



Midget White

60-80 eggs / year

12-21 lbs

Last Question....Do you like  
the breed?



# Marketing Advantages



Java- Excellent homestead chicken and forager, adapted to heat, slow growing but can be raised on lower protein diet



Campbell – An old English breed that can out-lay most chicken breeds including Leghorns!



Cotton Patch- Landrace linked with historic cotton farms, adapted to avoid predators, easy keepers

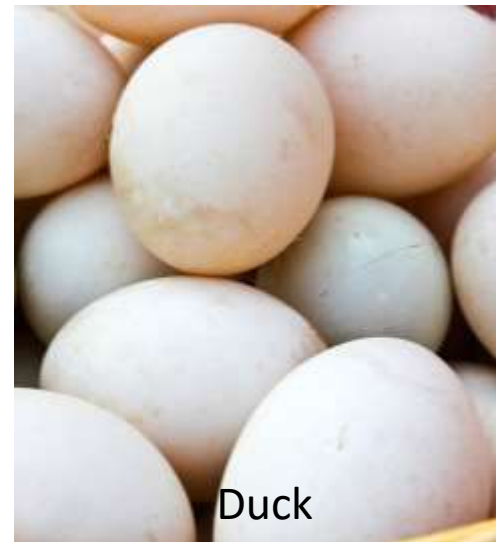
# Marketing Advantages With Eggs



Chicken



Turkey



Duck

Multicolored chicken eggs  
& alternative species eggs

# Pastured Poultry Opportunities

With good forage they can supplement up to 20% of their diet from forage in growing season.



# Why Pastured Poultry?

- More sustainable option
- Proven nutritional benefits
- Public demand outweighs supply





# Challenges of Pasturing

- Chickens more vulnerable to predators & neighborhood dogs
- Severe weather can impact production
- Occasional escapees over the fences
- Cost more than commercial methods
- Marketing key to success



# Methods



## Enclosed “Tractor”

- Better protection from predators
- Pastured but not real free-range
  - Space is limited
  - Frequent moves needed
- More efficient for smaller batches of poultry

# Methods

## Day ranging mobile coop with mobile fencing



- Free range management
- Open to aerial predators
- Larger spaces offered to birds
- Less frequent moves needed
- More efficient for larger batches of poultry

# Methods



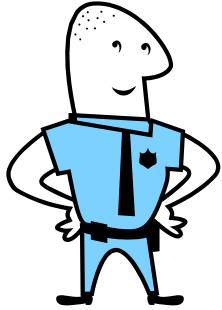
## **Silvo-pasturing chickens**

- Free range management
- Open to aerial predators
- Larger spaces offered to birds
- Best in warm months of the year when insects are most present
- Good for smaller or mid-sized batches of poultry

# Added Income with Breeding Stock



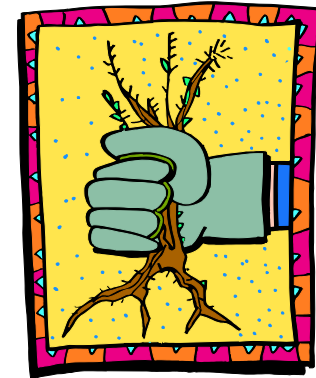
# Multi-tasking for Adding Value



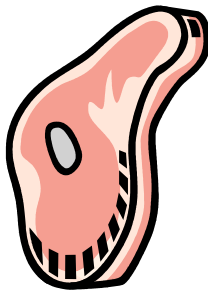
Security Guard



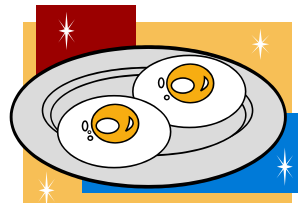
Pest Control



Weeding



Meat or eggs



Grass cutting

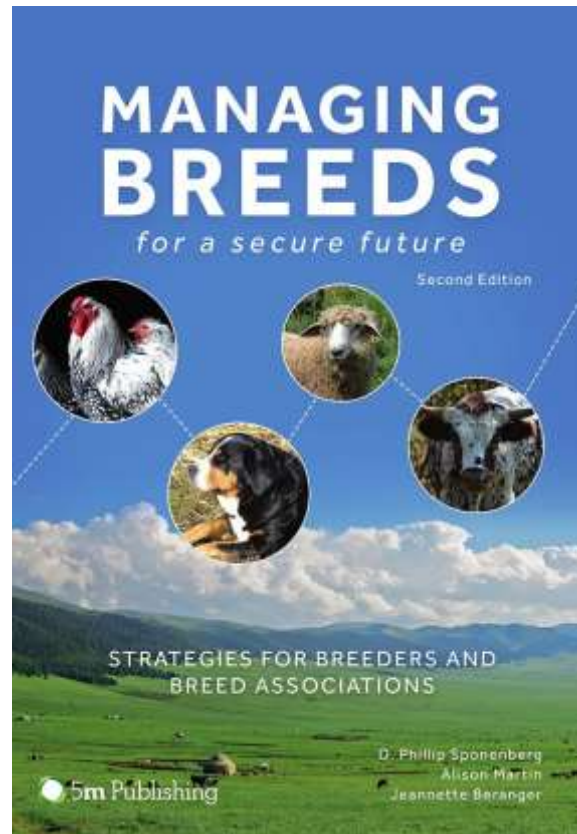
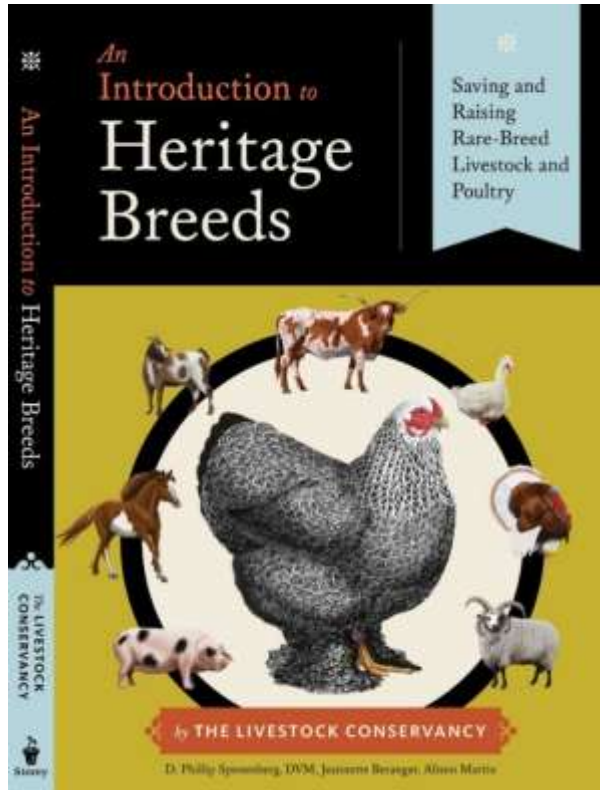
# Resources Online

- *How To Raise Heritage Turkeys on Pasture*
- *Assessment for Breeder Selection in Chickens*
  - *Biosecurity*
  - *Financial Resources*

***[www.livestockconservancy.org](http://www.livestockconservancy.org)***



# Our Books





# Questions?



Thank you!

Livestock Conservancy  
PO Box 477  
Pittsboro, NC 27312  
919-542-5704

[jberanger@livestockconservancy.org](mailto:jberanger@livestockconservancy.org)

# Connect with



## Upcoming webinars

- 🐔 **November 16:** The Art of Email: Farm Newsletters
- 🐔 **December 2:** Farm Finances
- 🐔 **December 9:** Humane Farming Mentorship Info Session
- 🐔 **December 14:** Facebook Groups: *You Secret Weapon for Customer Care, Loyalty and Profits*

## Grants, Scholarships, Training, Mentorship & More!

- 🐔 **Humane Farming Mentorship Program** – *applications due December 31*
- 🐔 **Fund-a-Farmer Grants** – *applications available next week*
- 🐔 **Scholarships** – *ongoing*

Sign up for emails @ [foodanimalconcernstrust.org/farmer/](http://foodanimalconcernstrust.org/farmer/)

## Join us on social media

