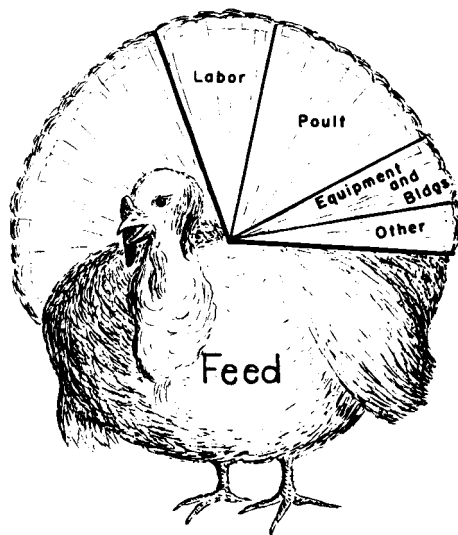


# *Cost of Raising*

# **MARKET TURKEYS**

*in Western Oregon, 1949*

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# Cost of Raising Market Turkeys

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This report summarizes basic information on the costs and returns from market turkeys in Western Oregon for 1949. All flocks included in this report were Broad-Breasted Bronze turkeys.

## Cost of Raising Turkeys

On the whole, the year 1949 was not favorable for the production of turkeys in Oregon. When all costs had been considered, including an allowance for operator and family labor, interest on investment, depreciation on buildings and equipment, costs exceeded returns by about 25 cents per bird. Some producers, however, did not raise turkeys at a loss. The 10 most profitable flocks were raised at a profit of \$1.10 per bird. The 10 least profitable flocks were raised at a loss of \$1.69 per bird. The explanation for this wide variation awaits further analysis.

Table 1. COST OF RAISING MARKET TURKEYS IN WESTERN OREGON, 1949

Item	Cost per turkey raised	
	Bought as day old	Started or custom brooded
Number of flocks . . . . .	79	8
Number of birds raised per flock . . . . .	2,655	3,233
Labor . . . . .	\$ .63	\$ .37
Feed . . . . .	4.79	4.23
Poults . . . . .	.98	1.90
Equipment and building . . . . .	.33	.15
Miscellaneous . . . . .	.28	.21
Total cost per bird . . . . .	\$7.01	\$6.86
Less manure credits . . . . .	.06	.06
Net cost per bird . . . . .	\$6.95	\$6.80
Total returns per bird . . . . .	6.69	6.68
Net profit per bird . . . . .	\$-.26	\$-.12
Net profit per bird, all flocks* . . . . .	\$-.25	
Cost per pound of gain, all flocks* . . . . .	37.7¢	
Total returns per pound of gain, all flocks* . . . . .	37.3¢	

\*Includes 2 mixed flocks (some birds day old and some started)

The labor, feed, building, and equipment expenses were less for started and custom-brooded turkeys than for turkeys bought one day old, since the operators did not have these birds during the brooding period. Brooding fees and higher poult costs were found for these flocks. Both types of flocks were about equally profitable.

### Mortality of Birds

The mortality of flocks kept from one day old until raised was 14.7 per cent. An average of 8.6 per cent of the birds were lost in brooding and 6.1 per cent were lost while on the range. These losses compare favorably with those reported by studies in other areas of the United States.

Table 2. MORTALITY OF TURKEYS RAISED IN WESTERN OREGON, 1949  
(79 Flocks Bought at One Day Old)

Period of raising	Mortality rate
	<u>Per cent</u>
Brooding . . . . .	8.6
On range . . . . .	6.1
Total mortality . . . . .	14.7

### Labor Requirements

One man can care for a large flock of turkeys. On an average only 0.6 hour of labor was spent per bird in raising a turkey from one day old to market age. Nearly one-third of this time was spent in brooding the poults, half of it was spent during the time the poults were on the range, and 17 per cent was spent as indirect labor, that is, labor of an overhead nature that was scattered throughout both periods.

Table 3. LABOR REQUIREMENT FOR TURKEYS RAISED IN WESTERN OREGON, 1949  
(79 Flocks Bought as One Day Old)

Period of raising	Labor required		Proportion of labor
	Per 1,000 birds raised	Per bird raised	
	<u>Man hours</u>	<u>Man hours</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Brooding . . . . .	196	.20	32
On range . . . . .	312	.31	51
Indirect labor* . . . . .	101	.10	17
Total labor . . . . .	609	.61	100

\*Estimated labor unaccounted for in regular duties such as: occasional checking of birds at night, attending producer meetings, consulting with buyers and feed dealers, keeping records, etc.

Only a small proportion of the labor was hired on two-thirds of the flocks and there was considerable hired labor for one-fifth of the flocks. The average value placed by operators on their own labor was \$1.10 per hour. Operator labor on all flocks was charged at this rate. Hired labor was charged with the actual wages paid. Farmers who bought started or custom-brooded turkeys, of course, had lower labor expenses.

Table 4. COST OF LABOR FOR TURKEYS RAISED IN WESTERN OREGON, 1949

Kind of labor	Day old		Started or custom brooded	
	Labor per bird	Cost per bird	Labor per bird	Cost per bird
	<u>Man hours</u>		<u>Man hours</u>	
Operator, direct . . . . .	.31	\$ .34	.14	\$ .15
Operator, indirect . . . . .	.11	.12	.03	.03
Family labor . . . . .	.07	.07	.05	.05
Hired labor . . . . .	.12	.10	.12	.14
Total . . . . .	.61	\$ .63	.34	\$ .37
Cost per hour of labor	\$1.03		\$1.09	

### Sex of Turkeys

Most flocks were straight-run, that is, there was no selection of one sex over another. In 11 of the 89 flocks, however, a high percentage of the birds were hens. Two flocks were predominately toms.

Table 5. DISTRIBUTION OF TURKEYS RAISED BY SEX  
(89 Flocks in Western Oregon, 1949)

Sex	Average number in flock	Proportion of total <u>Per cent</u>	Number of flocks that were 70 per cent or more of one sex
Hens . . . . .	1,464	54	11
Toms . . . . .	1,268	46	2
Unknown . . . . .	22	--	--
Total . . . . .	2,754	100	

Sixty-eight per cent of the total cost of producing turkeys was feed cost. An average of 40.2 pounds of scratch feed was consumed per turkey raised and 67.4 pounds of mash and pellets. A total of 107.6 pounds of these feeds per bird raised was consumed. Farmers who bought turkeys already brooded fed about 12 pounds less feed. Wheat and corn were the most common scratch grains fed. The average price for all scratch feed was \$3.25 per 100 pounds. It was \$4.80 per hundred pounds for mashes and pellets. As a rule, ranges supplied little feed.

Table 6. AMOUNT AND COST OF FEED FED PER TURKEY RAISED  
IN WESTERN OREGON, 1949  
(Birds from 69 Flocks Fed from One Day Old to Market Age)

Feed	Feed per bird	Cost of feed	Proportion of cost	Price per 100 pounds of feed
	Pounds		Per cent	
Wheat . . . . .	13.4	\$ .48	10	\$ 3.58
Corn . . . . .	11.0	.36	7	3.25
Oats . . . . .	7.0	.20	4	2.83
Barley . . . . .	1.7	.05	1	2.90
Speltz . . . . .	1.2	.03	1	2.72
Mixed scratch . . . . .	1.3	.05	1	4.20
Other . . . . .	4.6	.14	3	3.16
All scratch . . . . .	40.2	\$1.31	27	\$ 3.25
All mash and pellets . . . . .	67.4	3.24	68	4.80
All scratch, mash and pellets . . .	107.6*	\$4.55	95	\$ 4.21
Supplemental feed, grit and range .		.24	5	
Total cost . . . . .		\$4.79	100	

\*Total pounds of feed for started or custom-brooded birds - 95.6.

### Age of Turkeys at Time of Market

Twenty-eight weeks (196 days) was a common growing period for turkeys. Hens were sold a little earlier than toms and breeders were separated a little earlier than market birds.

Table 7. AVERAGE AGE OF TURKEYS AT TIME SOLD  
AND AGE OF BREEDERS AT TIME SEPARATED  
(86 Flocks in Western Oregon, 1949)

Class of birds	Average age of birds*	
	Hens	Toms
	Days	Days
Breeders . . . . .	192	196
Market birds . . . . .	193	204

\*196 days equal 28 weeks or 7 months.

## Weights of Birds at Market

The average dressed weight of hens was 13.9 pounds per bird. Toms averaged about 10 pounds heavier than hens. The birds were New York dressed, that is, feathers and blood only were removed. The average gain was a little less than 0.1 pound per day. Toms gained at a faster rate and hens gained at a slower rate. The higher grade birds weighed a little more than the lower grade birds in both sexes.

Table 8. AVERAGE WEIGHT AND GAIN PER DAY OF TURKEYS  
(85 Flocks in Western Oregon, 1949)

Sex	Average dressed weight of turkeys	Gain per turkey per day
	<u>Pounds</u>	<u>Pounds</u>
Hens . . . . .	13.9	.073
Toms . . . . .	24.2	.119
All birds . . . . .	18.4	.094

Table 9. AVERAGE WEIGHTS OF TURKEYS BY GRADES  
(88 Flocks in Western Oregon, 1949)

Grade	Average dressed weights	
	Hens	Toms
	<u>Pounds</u>	<u>Pounds</u>
Breeders* . . . . .	14.0	25.1
Grade A . . . . .	13.3	24.5
Grade B . . . . .	13.5	23.3
Grade C . . . . .	12.7	21.7
Undergrade . . . . .	12.9	19.2
All turkeys . . . . .	13.9	24.2

\*Dressed weight equivalent

## Grade of Birds

Many of the turkeys raised in Western Oregon are used for producing hatching eggs. An average of one-third of the hens in each flock were raised for breeders. Since a smaller proportion of the large flocks were kept for breeders, a little less than one-third (29 per cent) of all the hens in the study were kept or sold as breeders. A much smaller percentage of the toms were kept as breeders. Breeder grade requirements are high. Combining the breeder and Grade A grades together shows 92 per cent of the hens and 82 per cent of the toms at top grade.

Table 10. DISTRIBUTION OF TURKEYS BY GRADE  
(88 Flocks in Western Oregon, 1949)

Grade	Birds in flocks	
	Hens	Toms
	<u>Per cent</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Breeders . . . . .	34	6
Grade A . . . . .	58	76
Grade B . . . . .	5	12
Grade C . . . . .	2	4
Undergrade and others . . . . .	1	2
Total . . . . .	100	100

### Prices Received

The average New York dressed price received for hens was 44.6 cents per pound compared with 30.3 cents per pound for toms. Using average prices and weights, the average return for hens was \$6.20 per bird compared with \$7.33 for toms. A common buyer practice was to pay 3 cents less per pound for Grade B hens and toms than for Grade A, to pay 7 cents less for Grade C hens than Grade B, and pay 5 cents less for Grade C toms than Grade B. Typically, breeders were sold at Grade A price on their live weight. This meant that breeders sold for a premium of about 10 per cent over Grade A birds.

Table 11. DRESSED PRICES RECEIVED AND VALUES FOR TURKEYS BY GRADE\*  
(88 Flocks in Western Oregon, 1949)

Grade	Price per pound (dressed)	
	Hens	Toms
	<u>Cents</u>	<u>Cents</u>
Breeders† . . . . .	48.1	33.6
Grade A . . . . .	43.7	30.9
Grade B . . . . .	40.4	27.7
Grade C . . . . .	33.1	22.3
Undergrade . . . . .	15.3	15.4
Average . . . . .	44.6	30.3
Value per bird (using average weights and prices)	\$6.20	\$7.33

\*Net price to farmer. Buyer pays for hauling, killing, processing.

†Breeder price reduced to dressed weight equivalent.