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European Commission (EU) Report on the Welfare of Broilers

The EU does not have Community legislation on keeping and breeding poultry kept for meat production. A recommendation on domestic fowl was adopted in 1995, however the Recommendation does not sufficiently cover all aspects of poultry welfare. The EU commission asked its Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare to prepare a report on the welfare of broilers. The Commission asked the particular attention be paid to problems arising from genetic selection for increased appetite, space requirements for birds during the fattening period and health problems arising from rapid fattening.

In 1998 EU chicken production was about 6 million metric tons (carcass-weight). Consumption was 5.4 million metric tons and average chicken meat consumption was 14.47 kg carcass-weight. Chicken represents more than 17 percent of the total meat and meat products consumed in the EU.

Main Producers	% EU production	Main consumers	% EU consumption
France	20.2	United Kingdom	23.6
UK	18.6	Spain	16.6
Spain	14.6	France	13.7
Italy	11.0	Italy	12.1
Netherlands	9.9	Germany	11.8
Others	25.7	Others	22.2

Source: EC DG Agriculture

The EU is a net exporter of chicken meat and products and was 110 percent self-sufficient in 1998. Imports are growing faster than exports, yet they supply less than 4 percent of the EU consumption. The development of trade in low price chicken breasts from Brazil and Thailand is the main reason. These imports are mainly used as raw materials by the processors of convenience foods. In France most of the chicken breasts used by the delicatessen processors to produce chicken ham are imported. Third Countries are not committed to follow EU welfare rules.

In recent years there have been two major developments in the market for chicken products, both of which may affect animal welfare issues. The preferential use of fresh products rather than frozen products, and the development of more convenience foods. Fresh products are much more perishable and have shorter delays between slaughtering and consumption. This creates a barrier to the imports from third countries. However, imports are increasing for frozen products used in the preparation of convenience foods, which is a fast growing segment. Processed food products are more distant from the animal in the mind of the consumer and animal welfare is not uppermost in the consumer's mind. Convenience products can be processed from frozen raw materials and processors are not bound to mention the origin of the raw materials. Also, increased consumer demand and use of deboning mechanisms are likely to lead to the production of broilers with a

heavier slaughter weight. Such chickens have more welfare problems than lighter chickens.

Two simulations have been carried out to estimate additional costs and benefits involved in the implementation of various measure to improve the welfare of the birds. Different means of improving chicken welfare include changing the stocking density and limiting the growth rate. Current stocking density is 38.4 kg/sq m. Reducing stocking density to 25 could increase production cost an estimated 10.2 percent. If reduced stocking density improves chicken welfare, mortality could be reduced. At 38.4 mortality rate is 5.9. This would be reduced 50 percent in 25 kg/sqm. It is likely that a reduction of the stocking density to 25 kg/sqm would result in a 7 to 10 percent increase of production cost.

In France, strains with a lower growth rate have been used to product "Label rouge" chicken for more than 20 years. It is possible to use a cross of a female "Label rouge" and a standard male to produce a basic chicken which would result in the improvement of several welfare criteria: lower mortality rate and improved breeder welfare since female breeders would not require feed restriction. Slaughter age would increase to 50.5 days compared with 40.7, and food conversion would go up from 1.89 to 2.10. These steps would increase the cost of production, but would be partly offset by a lower feed price (because feed nutritional density is lower) and a lower chick price (because breeder fertility and egg hatchability are greatly improved). Production cost would be about 5 percent higher.

The Committee concluded that chicken meat has increased its proportion of the total meat market because of beneficial price development and a positive health image among consumers. It is relatively inelastic in price-sensitivity compared with beef, and about the same as pork. Production of chicken meat has not been the focus of any extensive public welfare debate so there has been little pressure from consumers to improve the welfare of broilers. In some member states an increasing number of consumers are expressing concern about the welfare of chickens since this is being reflected in the welfare standards during production by some food retailers.

Recommendations. The major welfare problems in broilers are those which can be regarded as side effects of the intense selection for growth and feed conversion which result in fast growth rates. The most important recommendation is therefore that every effort should be taken to remove such side effects from breeding. A higher priority should be given to health variables even at the expense of the selection pressure for growth and feed conversion.

The effects of stocking density vary according to factors such as slaughter age and weight, ventilation rate or quality of ventilation equipment, and climatic conditions. The Committee recommended that maximum stocking rates should be specified for a particular building and climatic control capacity.

Source: Report of the Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare, Adopted 21 March 2000, European Commission.

Inspected Egg Products-U.S. & Canada Export/Import Trade
U.S. Exports to Canada, in Pounds (Preliminary)

Type	Week Ending April 15, 2000		Year-To-Date	
	(000)		(000)	
	2000	1999/1	2000	1999
Liquid	39	391	1,667	4,127
Frozen	0	0	40	6
Dried	36	0	112	174
Total	75	391	1,819	4,307

U.S. Imports From Canada, in Pounds (Preliminary)

Type	Week Ending April 15, 2000		Year-To-Date	
	(000)		(000)	
	2000	1999/1	2000	1999
Liquid	110	34	1,981	1,207
Frozen	6	5	140	90
Dried	40	0	443	10
Total	156	39	2,564	1,307

Inspected Shell Eggs

U.S Exports To Canada, In 30-Dozen Cases (Preliminary)

	Week Ending April 15, 2000		Year-To-Date	
	2000	1999/1	2000	1999
Jumbo	0	11	246	138
Extra Large	770	928	8,363	8,005
Large	3,560	532	38,237	25,352
Medium	1,391	1,575	11,058	13,751
Ungraded	8,220	10,960	33,960	83,159
Misc	780	750	4,530	1,650
Total	14,721	14,756	96,394	132,055

/1 Comparable Week, to-date figures may not total due to rounding.

Source: USDA/AMS Poultry Programs, Market News Branch in cooperation with Agriculture Canada, Poultry Development Division.

CENTRAL REGION PRICES NEGOTIATED FOR MECHANICALLY SEPARATED CHICKEN IN TRUCKLOT AND LESS THAN TRUCKLOT VOLUMES, CENTS PER POUND FOR DELIVERY WITHIN TWO WEEKS. 21-APR-00

CHICKEN PRICES

FAT CONTENT	-----FROZEN-----		-----FRESH-----	
	FOB DOCK	DELIVERED	FOB DOCK	DELIVERED
15% OR LESS				
RANGE	-	-	-	-
WTD AVERAGE				

0 pounds, this includes 0 pounds for export shipment.

CHICKEN PRICES, WITH ADDED SKIN

15% OR LESS				
RANGE	-	20.00	12.25-15.00	14.00-17.00
WTD AVERAGE		20.00	12.88	15.00
326,400 pounds, this includes 0 pounds for export shipment.				
15-20%				
RANGE	-	-	10.00-12.50	13.00-13.50
WTD AVERAGE			10.94	13.15

1,938,000 pounds, this includes 408,000 pounds for export shipment.

20% OR MORE

RANGE	-	-	-	-
WTD AVERAGE				

0 pounds, this includes 0 pounds for export shipment.

* INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING STATES: AL, AR, IA, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MI, MN, MO, MS, ND, NE, OK, OH, SD, TN, TX, WI

LIVE POULTRY SLTRD UNDER INSPECTION W/E 15-Apr-00 (PRELIMINARY)

U.S. FOWL SLAUGHTERED DOMESTICALLY

	LIGHT HENS	HEAVY HENS	TOTAL HENS
	THOUSANDS		
HEAD	2,259	1,335	3,594
LAST WEEK	2,009	1,345	3,354
SAME WEEK YR AGO	2,510	1,343	3,853
TO-DATE/2000	30,560	20,449	51,009
TO-DATE/1999	32,613	19,959	52,572

U.S. FOWL SLAUGHTERED IN CANADA

	LIGHT HENS	HEAVY HENS	TOTAL HENS
	THOUSANDS		
HEAD	484	0	484
LAST WEEK	561	11	572
SAME WEEK YR AGO	441	0	441
TO-DATE/2000	8,176	50	8,226
TO-DATE/1999	7,336	113	7,449

SOURCE: AGRICULTURE CANADA, PLTRY DEVELOP. DIV.

TOTAL U.S. FOWL SLAUGHTERED IN THE U.S. AND CANADA

	LIGHT HENS	HEAVY HENS	TOTAL HENS
	THOUSANDS		
HEAD	2,743	1,335	4,078
LAST WEEK	2,570	1,356	3,926
SAME WEEK YR AGO	2,951	1,343	4,294
TO-DATE/2000	38,736	20,499	59,235
TO-DATE/1999	39,949	20,072	60,021

EASTERN REGION PRICES NEGOTIATED FOR MECHANICALLY SEPARATED CHICKEN IN TRUCKLOT AND LESS THAN TRUCKLOT VOLUMES, CENTS PER POUND FOR DELIVERY WITHIN TWO WEEKS. 21-APR-00

CHICKEN PRICES

FAT CONTENT	-----FROZEN-----		-----FRESH-----	
	FOB DOCK	DELIVERED	FOB DOCK	DELIVERED
15% OR LESS				
RANGE	15.50	-	16.00	-
WTD AVERAGE	15.50		16.00	

320,000 pounds, this includes 80,000 pounds for export shipment.

CHICKEN PRICES, WITH ADDED SKIN

15% OR LESS				
RANGE	13.25-14.00	-	-	15.00
WTD AVERAGE	13.63			15.00
160,000 pounds, this includes 0 pounds for export shipment.				
15-20%				
RANGE	13.00-14.00	13.50-15.00	11.25-13.00	12.00-14.00
WTD AVERAGE	13.28	14.50	11.88	13.33

1,328,000 pounds, this includes 200,000 pounds for export shipment.

20% OR MORE

RANGE	-	-	-	12.75
WTD AVERAGE				12.75

240,000 pounds, this includes 0 pounds for export shipment.

* INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING STATES: CT, DE, FL, GA, MA, MD, ME, NC, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, SC, VA, VT, WV

NATIONAL YOUNG TURKEY PARTS AND BULK MEAT

FROZEN (UNLESS SPECIFIED), CENTS PER LB., DELIVERED FIRST RECEIVERS, PART AND FULL TRUCKLOTS
APRIL 21, 2000

Domestic trading was limited to meats and further processed items. Uneven holiday schedules found fresh breast meat available in some areas. The availability of breast trim was limited, fresh destrapped tenders were mixed. Export trading was fairly active on thigh meat, mostly to Asia.

FRIDAY, APRIL 21, 2000**EXPORT TRADING**

	PRICE RANGE	L.S.T. CODE 1/	WTD AVG PRICE	VOLUME (000)	WEEKLY WTD AVG PRICE	WEEKLY VOLUME (000)
DRUMSTICKS, TOMS	24.00		24.00	120	23.77	824
WINGS FULL-CUT - TOMS						
WINGS, V-TYPE, TOM		R	20.00	312	20.00	520
TAILS		M	20.00	108	20.00	108
MECHANICALLY SEPARATED 2/		W	14.00	208	13.67	312
THIGH MEAT - FROZEN	56.50-62.00		58.88	416	59.30	1,080

THURSDAY, APRIL 20, 2000**EXPORT TRADING**

	PRICE RANGE	L.S.T. CODE 1/	WTD AVG PRICE	VOLUME (000)
DRUMSTICKS, TOMS	23.00-26.00		24.50	208
WINGS FULL-CUT - TOMS				
WINGS, V-TYPE, TOM	20.00		20.00	312
TAILS		M	20.00	108
MECHANICALLY SEPARATED 2/		W	14.00	208
THIGH MEAT - FROZEN	56.50-60.00		58.25	416

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19, 2000**EXPORT TRADING**

	PRICE RANGE	L.S.T. CODE 1/	WTD AVG PRICE	VOLUME (000)
DRUMSTICKS, TOMS	24.00		24.00	352
WINGS FULL-CUT - TOMS				
WINGS, V-TYPE, TOM	20.00		20.00	208
TAILS		M	20.00	108
MECHANICALLY SEPARATED 2/	14.00		14.00	208
THIGH MEAT - FROZEN	62.00		62.00	40

TUESDAY, APRIL 18, 2000**EXPORT TRADING**

	PRICE RANGE	L.S.T. CODE 1/	WTD AVG PRICE	VOLUME (000)
DRUMSTICKS, TOMS	21.00-24.50		21.97	144
WINGS FULL-CUT - TOMS				
WINGS, V-TYPE, TOM		F	20.00	208
TAILS		M	20.00	108
MECHANICALLY SEPARATED 2/	13.00		13.00	104
THIGH MEAT - FROZEN	60.00		60.00	104

MONDAY, APRIL 17, 2000**EXPORT TRADING**

	PRICE RANGE	L.S.T. CODE 1/	WTD AVG PRICE	VOLUME (000)
DRUMSTICKS, TOMS		F	23.69	608
WINGS FULL-CUT - TOMS				
WINGS, V-TYPE, TOM		F	20.00	208
TAILS	20.00		20.00	108
MECHANICALLY SEPARATED 2/				
THIGH MEAT - FROZEN	63.50		63.50	104

1/ CODES FOR LAST SIGNIFICANT TRADE (L.S.T.): M=MONDAY T=TUESDAY W=WEDNESDAY R=THURSDAY F=FRIDAY

2/ Product contains 15-20% fat with skin added.