

COMMODITY

POULTRY

Description

British Columbia's poultry industry is comprised of four major sectors: chicken (meat) growers, the layer (egg) industry, broiler breeders and turkey producers. Other smaller sectors include breeder pullet growers, layer pullet growers, layer breeders and turkey breeders. Ducks, geese, squab, pheasant, quail, partridge, tinamou and silkie chickens are also produced.

Chicken

Poultry meat production begins with the incubation of eggs. Newly hatched chicks and turkey poults are moved into production barns. Chicken barns typically feature computerized feeding, watering, heating and ventilation. Chickens are fed for seven weeks. Most turkeys are fed 13 to 16 weeks.

Eggs destined for human consumption are differentiated from hatching eggs, which are used for commercial poultry meat production. Layers (female chickens) begin producing eggs when they are 18 to 21 weeks old and lay about 290 eggs per year. After 12 to 14 months, production declines and hens are sold for use in processed foods.

Ostrich

Ostrich are produced throughout BC. Adult ostriches weigh approximately 113kg (250lbs) females, and 159kg (350lbs) males. Ostriches produce 35 to 55 eggs per hen over their approximately 70 year life span. Some shelter is required to protect the feed from rain and snow and to protect the ostriches from extreme weather conditions.

Ostrich males can become quite aggressive during the breeding season and protect the females, nests and their territory. As well ostriches can be dangerous to the public. For these reasons it is necessary to have appropriate fencing and setbacks from the pens to the property line with interior fencing designed specifically for ostriches. The 'catch pens' are often covered, as darkness tends to settle the birds.

Emu

Emus can be quite large, up to 1.8m (6ft) tall and to 68kg (150lbs) in weight. Adequate fencing and alleyways are a necessity. Shelters may be made of wood, tin, fiberglass or suitable other materials. Adults are quite tolerant to cold weather. Emu may be handled for hauling at night, as that is when they are most calm. Trailers should be enclosed, well ventilated, padded and have non-slip floors.

Female emus emit a booming noise that can be annoying to some. This noise is expected and can occur at any time of the day or night.

Duck

Ducks are usually reared indoors on litter or on raised floors over the manure storage.

Farm Practices of Particular Interest

Practices for specific farm activities can be found in the farm practice section of this reference guide. Farm practices that are of particular interest to poultry production include:

Animal Husbandry

Farmers are responsible for ensuring that the basic needs of animals in their care are met. Feed, water, shelter and basic care must be provided

See Farm Practice: [Animal Care and Handling](#)

Farm Buildings

Poultry producers require buildings to house livestock, protect equipment and stored feed, fertilizers, manure and pesticides. From time to time pests such as flies and rodents can be found in and around buildings.

See Farm Practice: [Feeding and Watering](#) [Manure Storage and Use](#)
[Pest Management](#) [Storage of Farm Supplies and Products](#)
[Storage of Hazardous Materials](#) [Structures](#)
[Ventilation](#)

Legislation

Agricultural producers are expected to follow all legislation that pertains to their farming operation. The *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act* stipulates that the farm operation must meet the *Health Act*, *Pesticide Control Act*, *Waste Management Act* and the regulations under those acts. Information on federal and provincial legislation can be found in Appendices B and C.

Acts that pertain to specific farm activities are listed in the farm practices section of this reference guide. Local government bylaws may also apply to some farm practices. Acts that are not referenced elsewhere that are of special interest to poultry producers include the following:

Provincial

[Animal Disease Control Act](#) – Provides authority to limit the spread of contagious diseases

[Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act](#) – Ensures that animals are treated fairly

Local Government

Applicable *Animal Control Bylaws* and *Noise Bylaws* where in place.

Publications

Publications that provide information on poultry production include, but are not limited to, the following (refer to Appendix D for details):

British Columbia Environmental Farm Plan Reference Guide

Care of Hatching Eggs Before Incubation

Control of Insect and Related Pests of Livestock and Poultry in British Columbia

Control of Rats and Mice on Poultry Farms

Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Poultry from Hatchery to Processing Plant

Management of Flies in Layer Barns

Management of Dust in Broiler Operations (Updated Version)

Management of Noise on Poultry Farms

Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals – Transportation