

Turkey production

Turkey, scientifically known as (*Meleagris gallopavo*) belongs to the family of birds called Meleagrididae. The young birds are called poults; the male birds are referred to as turkey cocks or toms while the female are called turkey hens (Ogundipe and Dafwang, 1980). Turkey is reared primarily for meat or as breeders to produce hatching eggs. They are rarely kept for the production of table eggs though the eggs are edible.

The growth of turkey industry in Nigeria has risen to 1.5- 2 million tons per year. This fast growth in the industry was made possible by intensification of production and development of large breeds with standard weights ranging from 15-17 kg for male and 8-10kg for female; some of these come from homestead.

Turkey production in Nigeria has largely remained at the small holder level due to various reasons ranging from management problems to lack of incentives by Government. This is the case with the soldier-farmers (Udokainyang, 2001). There is obvious lack of information on specific requirements for turkey production in Nigeria, which may be attributed to low level of research in Nigeria. More so, the lack of interest on turkey production was mainly due to the government policy that liberalized turkey importation since 1977. According to Thear and Fraser imported turkey formed about 60% of the total turkey in Nigeria market, while the rest is supplied by other sources including soldiers. Nigerians consume about 8.6g animal protein per day with turkey accounting for about 1.5g despite its great potentials in the supply of good quality animal protein and high rate of turnover of investment.

Commercial turkey farming is a profitable business idea. Turkey grows faster like broiler chickens and become suitable for slaughter purpose within a very short time. Turkey farming for meat production is very popular than egg production from turkey. Although some people keep a or several tom (a mature male turkey) as a pet.

Turkey farming is similar to other poultry birds farming like chickens, ducks, quails etc. Turkeys are also very social with humans and raising

turkeys is really very fun and enjoyable. Here I am describing some basics steps for starting commercial turkey farming business.

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