



Small-Scale Poultry Production Resources

compiled and annotated by

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General Livestock / Poultry Publications and Resources

- ATTRA and SARE publications:
 - ATTRA: <http://attra.ncat.org/livestock.html#Poultry> ATTRA contains a wealth of information on sustainable agriculture. Their livestock section has many good basic publications. A good one is the entrepreneur's toolbox for range poultry.
 - SARE: <http://www.sare.org> SARE funds producer grants to conduct research on your farm (applications due in December). Here are a few that related to poultry production (there are many on all types of livestock):
 - Determining cost-effectiveness of raising slow growing genotype broilers in three alternative housing systems
http://www.sare.org/reporting/report_viewer.asp?pn=FNE07-604
 - Evaluating Poultry Breeds Suitable for Pastured Production
http://www.sare.org/reporting/report_viewer.asp?pn=FS06-201
- Livestock water systems information - <http://www.umaine.edu/umext/pasture/Lessons/PDF/Grazing%20Lesson%207.pdf>
- For good information on livestock meat yields - <http://cetulare.ucdavis.edu/PUB/2005%204-H%20Fair%20Jr%20Livestock%20Auction%20Buyers%20Guide.pdf>
- Organic Livestock Handbook – Canadian Organic Growers. Covers general principles of livestock rearing, management tools, and goes through each of the species and their considerations in an organic system. Available through their website: www.cog.ca
- How to Build Animal Housing – Carol Ekarius. Good design plans for all species of livestock, including movable housing.
- Small Scale Livestock Farming – A Grassbased Approach – also by Carol Ekarius. Good general overview of livestock husbandry practices in pasture management systems.
- Any of Joel Salatin's books if you like his humorous writing style and encouragement about diversified livestock grazing – especially Pastured Poultry Profits.

Feed Companies:

- Natures Best Organic Feeds/Kreamer Feed – <http://www.organicfeeds.com>. Our favorite feed manufacturer. Based in PA but several stores in the region carry their line. We buy this feed from Walter at Horse and Buggy Feed in Winchendon; Route 12 North Winchendon, MA 01475 (978) 297-2518. Best feed because they have all the formulas for different stages of growth and they use both diatomaceous earth and beneficial lactobacillus in their feeds.
- Green Mountain Organic – P.O Box 505 Bethel Vt. 05032. 1-802-234-6278. We use this feed occasionally but prefer Natures Best.
- Blue Seal – <http://www.blueseal.com> - Very common brand, reliable feed, some good formulas, often very fresh. Are moving toward organic line.
- Poulin Grain – <http://www.poulingrain.com/>. We have never used this feed, but from what we hear, it is comparable to Blue Seal.

General Farm / Livestock Supplies & Materials

- Fertrell – <http://www.fertrell.com/> You can't buy anything from them directly you need to go through a dealer (none in Massachusetts), but they produce supplements for livestock to include in feed rations. Their products are in some of the better feeds.
- FarmTek – <http://www.farmtek.com/farm/supplies/home> carries general livestock supplies and will send you copious amounts of catalogs once you get on their mailing list.
- Gempler's - <http://www.gemplers.com/> the very popular general agricultural supplier; they carry a huge range of items; we ordered our silver reflective tarp from them to keep the animals cool in our range houses. They also carry shade netting that you can order in custom sizes. They also carry bird netting if you have problems with wild birds eating your feed or other predators which may affect your chickens.
- Northern Tool & Equipment - <http://www.northerntool.com/> - they carry general farm supplies, tools, generators, pumps and other useful farm tools.
- Premier Fence Company - <http://www.premier1supplies.com/> for your source of electric net fencing. They ship net fencing for free and carry a wide range of fencing products. Great customer service. The best fencing company in our opinion. A "local" distributor of fence products for livestock growers is Wellscroft Fence Company, in SW NH (Chesham, NH). They have a very knowledgeable staff and sell all Premier products; their sales location is on their farm set up with complete demonstration sites of all their fencing. They often offer electric fencing workshops in May each year to learn all of the different applications. A great family outing! They carry a variety of fence chargers; solar panels; marine deep-cycle batteries, ground posts; etc. You can visit their website at: <http://www.wellscroft.com/fence/fenceHome.html>
- Kencove Farm Fence Supplies - <http://www.kencove.com/fence/> Another fence company that carries the gamut of electric fencing.
- Sioux Steel Livestock Catalog - <http://www.siouxsteel.com/> A commercial supplier of gates, corals, feeders, mineral feeders, shelters, tanks, hog drinkers, and fencing.
- American Livestock Supply, Inc. - animal health products, medicines.
<http://www.americanlivestock.com/?gclid=CNLIImMjSgZUCFQVfFOodtiyhqA>
- Oesco, Inc. - <https://www.oescoinc.com/> - carries watering systems components and other tools & supplies for growers.
- Jeffers' Livestock – <http://www.jefferslivestock.com/ssc/> A good source for animal health and other general supplies. They carry supplies for rabbits, goats, fencing, etc.
- Nasco Farm and Ranch – <http://www.enasco.com/farmandranch/> - another source for animal health and livestock supplies.
- Farmer Boy Ag Supply – <http://www.farmerboyag.com/> We bought our bulk hog feeder and our chicken bell waterers from them. Good source of general agricultural supplies.
- The Barn Store of New England - <http://www.barnstoreofnewengland.com/> They are in Salisbury, NH and we haven't shopped here yet, but a farmer in RI recommended it.

Poultry Publications and Web Resources

- APPPA (American Pastured Poultry Producers): <http://www.apppa.org/> Their monthly newsletter, APPPA Grit! has helpful articles on pastured poultry production.
- The Poultry Site has good information on poultry, poultry health, diseases – a bit conventional and geared toward the larger poultry industry, but contains some useful information: <http://www.thepoultrysite.com/>

- The Feather Site also has a lot of good information on various breeds and supplies. The website is a bit hard to navigate (keep scrolling down until you see the Table of Contents), but there are good sources of info:
<http://www.feathersite.com/Poultry/BRKPoultryPage.html>
- Washington State University's Northwest Direct Program did a nice series on Pastured Poultry Resources and they have an excellent on-line calculator that you can input your production information and it spits out your profitability on a per-bird basis. Check it out! <http://nwdirect.wsu.edu/barriers/index.html> AND web tools for poultry producers (the profitability calculator) <http://nwdirect.wsu.edu/barriers/poultrygrowers.htm>
- The Chicken Health Handbook, by Gail Damerow (available through Amazon or other bookstores)
- Storey's Guide to Raising Chickens: Care / Feeding / Facilities, by Gail Damerow
- Raising Poultry on Pasture: Ten Years of Success by Jody, L Padgham, (the compilation of the past 10 years of good APPPA articles – a great resource!)
- Pastured Poultry Profits by Joel Salatin (the pastured poultry guru!).
- Success with Baby Chicks: A Complete Guide to Hatchery Selection, Mail-Order Chicks, Day-Old Chick Care, Brooding, Brooder Plans, Feeding, and Housing by Robert Plamondon. (great tips on chick care)

Backyard and Urban Poultry Production Resources

- The Backyard Poultry Magazine has good tips and tricks for raising chickens at home:
<http://www.backyardpoultrymag.com/>
- This website includes an online discussion forum, coop design ideas, and basic information on raising and hatching chickens <http://www.backyardchickens.com/>
- Chicken Feed: The World of Chickens – interesting site, full of information for raising poultry *naturally*. Sources of natural chicken feed, knowledge about traditional ways of feeding chickens around the world and in old times, putting health before profit in raising and feeding chickens. <http://www.lionsgrip.com/chickens.html>
- The City Chicken – Good photos of backyard movable chicken coops; informative site of a urban poultry farmer. <http://home.centurytel.net/thecitychicken/index.html>
- Poultry One – This website is part of a marketing umbrella, but they have some good resources and a free guide to raising chickens, lots of info: <http://poultryone.com/>
- The Chicken Video - A video on the basics for a first time chicken keeper.
<http://www.chickenvideo.com/>
- Mother Earth News has plenty of poultry articles such as this one:
<http://www.motherearthnews.com/196/eggstrava.aspx>
- A blog and image gallery of chicken coop designs: <http://urbanchickens.org/image/tid/25>
- An “ezine” with a search feature for poultry – has free plans for backyard coops and chicken tractors: <http://ezinearticles.com/?Chicken-Tractor-Plans-For-the-Backyard-Poultry-Enthusiast&id=2273694>
- Any search engine for “poultry,” “backyard chickens” will take you to LOTS of info.

Poultry-Specific Supplies / Materials:

- Kuhl Corp. – <http://www.kuhlcorp.com/cgi-bin/cp-app.cgi> they actually manufacture most of their items – we have purchased our chicken crates, waterers, and feeders (the big red range feeder we love). They have good customer service and offer a free catalog you can order.

- Gillis Agricultural Supply – <http://www.gillisag.com/> they offer the popular plasson bell waterers; bulk feeders; and have items other suppliers may not carry; they cater more toward the traditional poultry industry (automated systems), so you can at least see what more professional operations may be looking at as far as equipment. They have a catalog you can order.
- Eggcartons.com – <http://www.eggcartons.com/> a good source for new egg cartons of all sizes. You can buy misprinted cartons at a discount and can order any quantity.
- Cutler's Supply – <http://www.cutlersupply.com/store/> they carry a range of all chicken supplies; prices are decent. They have a catalog (black & white).
- Plasson - <http://www.plasson.com/pdefault.aspx> they are also a manufacturer and carry the newer bell waterers; other waterers
- Cornerstone Farm Ventures – <http://www.cornerstone-farm.com/> a small outfit in NY that carries a complete line of chicken processing equipment (cones, pluckers, scalders, knives, aprons, stainless steel tables, etc.). Jim McLaughlin is the owner. He has designed several mobile poultry processing units for NY state, and he has consulted with NESFI on the Massachusetts MPPU.
- Automatic Chicken door opener – A company in the UK which makes the chicken door opener we love. It's pricey but worth it. It has never failed us and runs on batteries. http://www.chicken-house.co.uk/door_opener.htm
- Poultry bags – you can purchase these from poultry catalogues, Staples also carries large, heavy-duty plastic 12x18, 3-mil food grade “sleeve” bags (and other various sizes).

Recommended Hatcheries / Chick Sources:

Note: We always take the Marek's disease vaccine with any of our chick orders; if other vaccinations are available from the hatchery (ie, coccidiosis), we recommend it, unless prohibited by your organic certifier.

- Meyers Poultry Farm – South Fork, PA, 814-539-7026; Diane Meyer: This is our new hatchery for 2008. They stock a wide range of meat birds, the most of any hatchery we have found. Very nice owner, Diane. Call for a free catalog. They have no website, very low tech but they have all the breeds you ever need/want and at good prices. Diane can also connect you to Certified Organic started pullets throughout the year, but you need to be ready to pick them up within a day or two of a phone call. These usually run \$7-8 and often are beak-tipped.
- Moyer's Hatchery - <http://www.moyerschicks.com/MC-Web/DesktopDefault.aspx> They carry the standard Cornish Cross and now have developed a new K22 Broiler (a pasture breed). Moyer's is a specialty hatchery – limited to a few breeds, but very consistent and extremely reliable. They also carry ready-to-lay pullets (white or brown egg layers – their own hybrid breed). You have to get orders in EARLY. They usually run \$5-6 depending on quantity and they always come debeaked as well. A very popular regional hatchery.
- Murray McMurray Hatchery – <http://www.mcmurrayhatchery.com/> pricier than other hatcheries, but quality always consistent and excellent varieties. They offer the “meat and eggs” packages. They carry broilers and layers and they offer a coccidiosis vaccine. They can usually respond to your order on relatively short notice. Generally service the retail backyard chicken market.
- Stromberg's - <http://www.strombergschickens.com/> We ordered some layers from them when we first got started. They gave us quality birds as well.
- Clearview Hatchery – Clearview Stock Farm & Hatchery, David Hartman, PO Box 399, Gratz, PA 17030 Phone: 717-365-3234 (they don't have a website – but they will send you

a catalog if you request it). A few years ago, we trialed a broiler a grower from NH recommended, the Silver Cross – a good broiler for pasture, but it is slow growing and has black/white feathers, so on processing the skin looks “peppered” due to the black feather shafts left in the skin, so it required some customer education. It performed well, but took more time to grow to market weight.

- Ridgway Hatchery – Phone: 740-499-2163, LaRue, OH - <http://www.ridgwayhatchery.com>. We ordered our latest pullets from them. Good prices, recommended by Horse and Buggy Feed store in Winchendon.
- Welp Hatchery – a full-service hatchery out of Iowa, phone: 1-800-458-4473. <http://www.welphatchery.com/> They also have a coccidiosis vaccine and their birds are cheaper than Murray McMurray. We ordered a round of broilers last fall and their birds were strong performers. They also have diversity of breeds and have good “bird care” advice on their website.
- Many, many others out there...

Chicken Processing:

This is a tough issue and is a big challenge for producers in the Northeast. There is considerable conflicting information out there about what you can and cannot do with poultry due to federal exemptions. Here is a link to a good guide on the USDA FSIS poultry producer exemptions (NOTE: Massachusetts Law still requires that if you intend to *sell* poultry (to anyone) - you need to do it in a state inspected sanitary facility (which will have a MDPH slaughter license). You can apply to the Mass Dept of Public Health’s Food Protection Program for a license to slaughter meat and poultry on your own farm, which would be required to legally sell birds even if you qualify for a USDA producer-processor exemption:

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FSISNotices/Poultry_Slaughter_Exemption_0406.pdf

<http://www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/dph/environmental/foodsafety/slaughter.pdf>

http://www.mass.gov/agr/animalhealth/disease_%20control_%20program/slaughter.htm

If you want to construct your own on-farm poultry processing facility, you will need to become familiar with the Mass Department of Public Health’s licensing requirements for slaughter facilities at: <http://www.mass.gov/>

Additional Massachusetts regulations regarding the slaughtering and processing of meat and poultry are 105 CMR 530.000 – 532.000 – you can search for the regulations online at:

<http://www.mass.gov/>

Cornell University published a good [Resource Guide to Direct Marketing Livestock and Poultry](#) that has a lot of great information on processing regulations for all types of livestock, and has a special section on poultry exemptions. Well worth the read. It can be downloaded for free at: <http://www.nyfarms.info/FAIDPaper.pdf>.

Mobile Poultry Processing Units: On November 3rd, 2006 the New England Small Farm Institute trialed it's new mobile poultry processing unit. Pete and I attended and took video footage of the event. Here is Pete’s edited version of the events - this is a sneak peak at the new unit in action. 3 min 16 sec. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XnIwhX3KSII> We have been working with NESFI and state regulators since 2006 to get this project funded and approved. State regulatory approvals are complete and a pilot project supporting field trials with producers occurred with 3 farms during the 2008 season. The plan is to expand its use and construct

another unit for eastern Mass in 2009. Regulators will be requiring a mandatory producer training prior to new users of the units.

We do not have any other recommendations for additional places to have birds processed, despite having contacted every place we've been referred and going through a whole list of other poultry producers for "insider processing information." Outpost Farm in Holliston, MA is one place to check out, they are inspected and during certain times of the year accept birds from outside their flocks. Their website with contact information is: <http://www.outpostfarm.net>

Chicken Health and Growing Resources:

MDAR Bureau of Animal Health – <http://www.mass.gov/agr/animalhealth/> Meghan McGrath and Ed Hageman (poultry inspectors) - 617-626-1700; For information about free poultry testing (Salmonella pullorum, Avian Influenza, Exotic Newcastle Disease, etc.) call (617) 626-1795.

UConn Pathobiology Diagnostic Laboratory - Pathobiology Lab, Storrs Campus 61 N Eagleville Rd., Unit 3089 Storrs, CT 06269-3089 FAX # (860)486-2794 Phone: 860-486-3738. If you have a referral from the MDAR Bureau of Animal Health (above), any diagnostic work done is free.

Mississippi State Poultry – A wealth of info on poultry raising and guides to disease diagnosis. <http://www.msstate.edu/dept/poultry/extensn.htm>

Virginia State University – Good tip sheet on brooding chicks and raising meat birds. <http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/poultry/factsheets/5.html>

USDA's APHIS (Animal, Plant Health Inspection Service) – has a wealth of information on poultry biosecurity practices. They have free calendars, postures, brochures, and other information: http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/birdbiosecurity/

Pasture Management Resources - There is a lot of information out there....a few things

Mass Grass is a new Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (and collaboration with UMass, NRCS, NOFA, and other organizations) working to promote pastured livestock production. A resource list will be compiled on the new website, so keep checking in: <http://www.umass.edu/cdl/MassGrass.html>

Subscribe to pasture management and rotational grazing periodicals, such as "Graze" and "The Stockman's Grass Farmer." While more focused on beef/dairy, there are good overall pasture management articles that will help with other pastured livestock.

Management Intensive Grazing – Jim Gerrish. An excellent resource on grass farming. Very easy to read and practical information.

Weeds of the Northeast – Uva, Neal, and DiTomaso. Great to help identify problems in the pasture and learn to ID plants that could be toxic to your livestock.

Other general tips:

1. Attend livestock workshops at agricultural conferences to learn new tips and ask lots of questions.
2. Always participate in farm tours, pasture walks, and get out there to see how other farmers do things. We always learn something new when visiting other operations. We also always have a digital camera available to take pictures of an innovative design we like (so we can remember and recreate at home).