

# Turkey is a year round item

NEWARK, Del. — Those turkeys who managed to keep their heads through Thanksgiving can't necessarily breathe sighs of relief on Christmas Eve. Nowadays, a turkey isn't safe at any time of the year.

Turkey production in the U.S. is expected to hit record levels in 1978, says Delaware Extension Poultry Specialist George Chaloupka. That's because people are eating more turkey today — almost 10 pounds per person per year.

Obviously, Americans aren't eating turkey only twice a year anymore. While the whole roasted bird maintains its traditional popularity at family feasts, turkey is also finding its way onto our tables throughout the year. Part of the change is due to the fact that the turkey industry has been actively marketing new forms of turkey, such as turkey ham and salami, turkey roll, turkey bologna and sausage, smoked turkey, frozen turkey loaf and pot pies.

Traditionally turkeys have been grown during the Spring and Summer for processing during late Summer and Fall. October and November were the peak processing months.

But now that the consumer is able to buy turkeys whole,

cut-up, and further processed at any time of the year, both production and consumption are beginning to show some evening out over an entire 12 month period.

According to USDA figures for 1978, turkey production totaled 228 million pounds during January through March; increased to 400 million pounds during April through June; increased again to 680 million pounds during July through September; and is estimated to total an additional 670 pounds in this final three month period of the year. And according to egg settings and poult hatches, the production outlook for the first half of 1979 is expected to be at least 20 per cent higher than the first half of 1978.



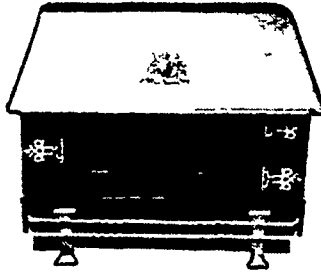
Turkey industry promotions and new products are making inroads into the seasonal consumption pattern. For instance, from 1963 to 1972, turkey consumption during the last three months of the year dropped from 57 per cent to 46 per cent of total consumption.

Ten years ago over 80 per cent of all turkeys were sold in the frozen state. Recently, however, some consumers have come to prefer the

chilled or ice-packed birds. While these consumers say the chilled birds taste better, Chaloupka doubts that anyone could really detect a difference in a controlled test.

Last year the National Turkey Federation interviewed 1000 consumers over the telephone. Over 60 per cent of those interviewed said they buy one or more whole turkeys because of a specific promotion campaign.

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Although 85 per cent of the consumers buy frozen turkeys, about one-third say they actually prefer fresh turkeys, while one-third prefer frozen, and the remaining third don't care.

Over 60 per cent of those interviewed have a favorite brand of turkey. While one-fourth of the consumers had

heard of turkey hot dogs, only three per cent had ever heard of turkey sausage.

The turkey industry is using the results of the survey to better meet consumer demands. They found that consumers do want more turkey available in many forms throughout the year.

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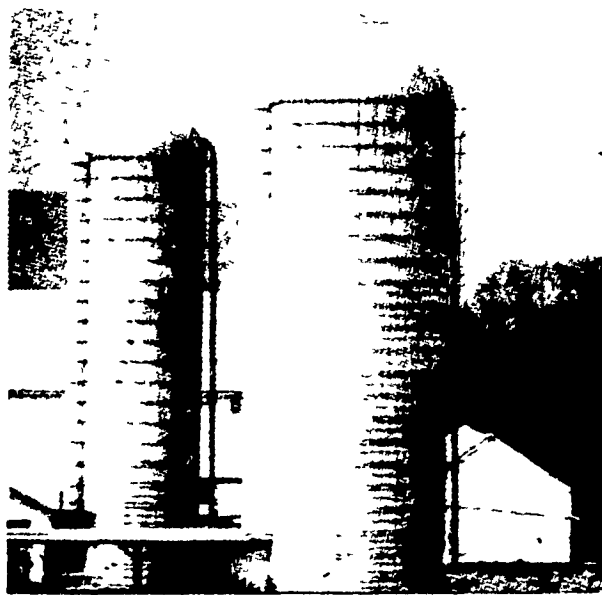
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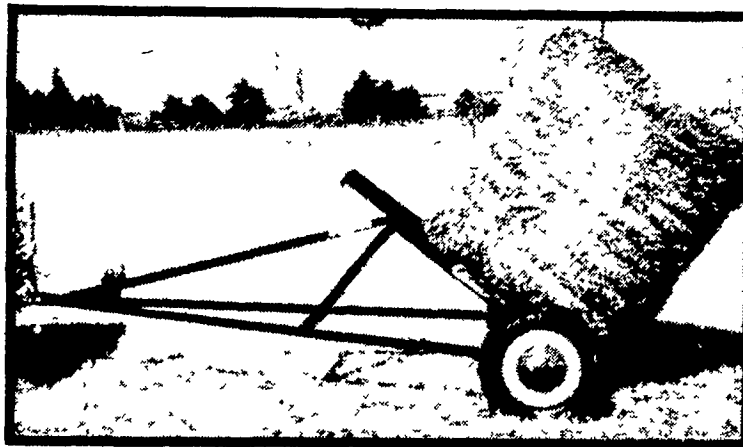
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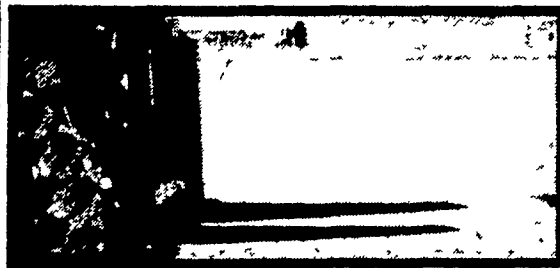
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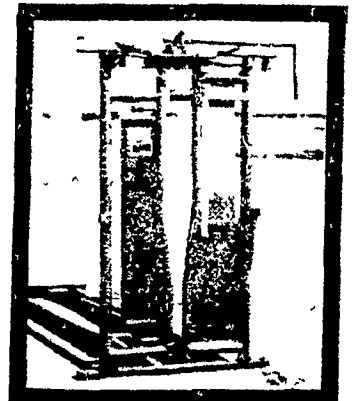
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