

# Avian flu boosts N.Y. broiler production

ITHACA, N.Y. — Commercial production of broiler chickens in New York State is staging a comeback after an absence of more than a quarter century. Paul W. Aho, a research

associate in the department of poultry and avian sciences in the New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University, reports that the production of broilers will

double this year in New York State to more than two million birds and could double again next year.

Aho made this projection in a presentation discussing the feasibility of commercial broiler

production in New York State at the 1984 Poultry Conference held here. The annual event, conducted July 25-26, focused on new trends and developments affecting the poultry industry in New York.

Also known as fryers, broilers are meat-type chickens, usually seven weeks old and weighing about four pounds each.

The last time broilers were raised on a large scale in New York State was in the 1950s. Since then, broiler production has been dominated by southern states, including Arkansas, Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina, Mississippi, and Maryland, where lower labor and feed costs were available.

Born in the 1930s, the broiler industry in this country gathered steam in the 1940s. Today the nation's broiler industry is a multibillion dollar business producing nearly 14 billion pounds of broiler meat per year, making the U.S. the leading broiler producer in the world. According to USDA figures, Americans will eat an average of 60 pounds of broilers in 1987, a big jump from the 32 pounds consumed in 1967.

Over the past three decades, the poultry industry in New York State has specialized in egg production, with annual farm income approaching \$100 million.

Spearheading the resumption of broiler production in New York State is Falls' Kosher Foods, Inc., in Livingston Manor, Sullivan County. A subsidiary of Hebrew National Kosher Foods, Inc., Falls' Poultry has already produced half a million broilers this year.

"Chances are that the production of more than two and a half million broilers per year by Falls' Poultry alone will be established on a permanent basis," Aho told the Cornell Poultry Conference.

As for the larger non-kosher market which reaches one billion pounds in New York State, Aho said that although New York is not competitive at the moment, new technology in broiler production including "cage rearing" could make upstate New York competitive in the future.

Aho, along with Cornell poultry specialists Dan Cunningham and Kavous Keshavarz, and Jerry Skoda, a Cornell Cooperative Extension agent in Sullivan County, helped Falls' Poultry study the feasibility of broiler production in New York state during 1983.

"One unforeseen factor that has prompted the production of broiler chickens in New York was the outbreak of avian influenza," Aho noted.

A viral respiratory disease in poultry, avian influenza broke out last fall in parts of Pennsylvania and later in New Jersey and Virginia. More than 13 million chickens died of the disease or were destroyed in Pennsylvania alone in order to stop the epidemic.

A quarantine stopped the flow of broilers from parts of Pennsylvania to the Falls' processing plant in New York, thus encouraging serious consideration of broiler production in New York State, according to Aho.

Aho said that farmers who now raise pullets, young female chickens, may be interested in broiler production.

"Broiler production," he pointed out, "will be appealing to pullet growers who have extra labor on the farm because broiler production provides a better return."

Aho summed up his presentation to the Cornell Poultry Conference this way: "It appears as though New York State will be a broiler-producing state once again."

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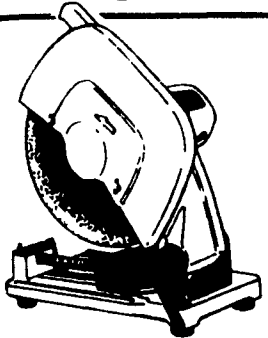
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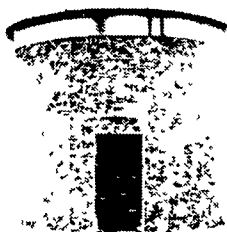
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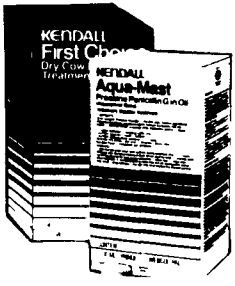
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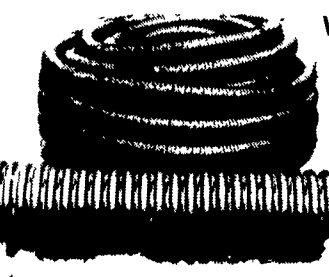
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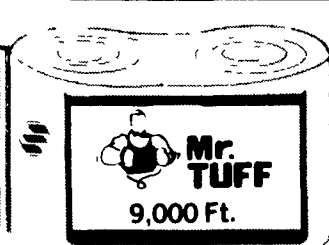


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