

Fresh Holiday Turkeys Build Reputation At Black's Farm

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Bedford Co. Correspondent
IMLER (Bedford Co.) — Black's Turkey Farm has been supplying fresh holiday turkeys for Bedford County families for the past 44 years.

"We've built up a reputation," says Guy Black Jr., who took over the farm after his father's death a few years ago. "And, we don't have to do much advertising."

Black sells 10,000 to 11,000 turkeys per year to individuals, local restaurants, clubs, and raffles. "I think we're unique," Black comments. "We don't sell our turkeys to big processors. Instead, we do the raising, butchering, pro-

cessing, and marketing ourselves. We are probably one of the few independent turkey farmers left."

Black buys his poults from Zealand, Michigan. They begin arriving in the spring and continue until August. The first poults are aimed for the Thanksgiving tables while those received later will be someone's Christmas dinner.

Turkeys range in size from 15 to 20 lbs. for the hens and 20 to 35 lbs. for the toms.

"We're the only farmers in a 100-mile radius with truly fresh turkeys," Black explains. "And, we have no trouble getting anywhere from \$1 to \$1.15 a pound. Our price is as high as it has ever

been here and we still don't have much trouble competing."

Because of a good press from the nutrition experts, the demand for turkey has been on a constant increase. Predictions are that the demand will continue.

"But, with the demand increasing so has the number of turkey farmers," Black says. "So, price wise, we're about where we always were."

Black admits to having years when disease has wiped out a large part of his flock but the last few years have been good. "Those first few weeks are the toughest," he says.

He recalls one year when the turkeys developed sores in their mouth and were unable to eat. "My own solution was to mix some clorox with their water. However, Penn State said we were wrong. So, we followed their advice only to find out a few months later, that we should have used our own instincts."

The Blacks have a 200-acre farm and raise about 1/4 of the corn they need for the turkeys. In addition to the turkeys, they also raise capon chickens.

Guy has one full-time worker, Betty Fickes, a spunky senior citizen who finds the work enjoyable. Other part-time help is needed during the processing season which begins about a week before Thanksgiving and continues until the end of the year.

Despite the constant sound of gobbling and the work which goes into raising that many turkeys, Black is still looking forward to the smell of a turkey roasting in his own oven on Thanksgiving day.



Guy Black Jr., and Betty Fickes show some of the turkeys that will arrive on Bedford County tables this holiday season.

White's Recognized As Conservation Farm

CLARKS SUMMIT (Lackawanna Co.) — Selected for its use of sound soil and water conservation practices, the White's Farm has been named a Take Pride in America Conservation Farm by the Lackawanna County Conservation District.

The outstanding conservation farm, operated by Scott White was recognized at a ceremony recently at White's Farm.

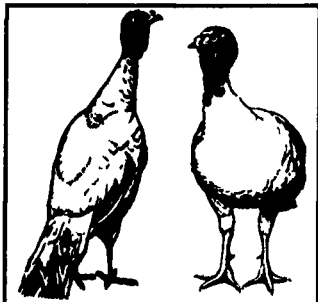
White's Farm was selected for its conscientious application of several conservation practices that help conserve soil and improve water quality. The most noteworthy aspect of White's conservation effort is not which conservation practices he uses but where he uses them and his firm belief in practicing conservation. White owns very few acres, but he has a conservation plan for it and uses

conservation practices like strip cropping and cover cropping.

Most of the cropland that he operates is rented land and as such he usually must convince the owner of the importance of conservation practices. His policy has always been that he won't rent the land if the landowner won't allow him to use any necessary conservation practices. Typical practices that he uses include contour strip cropping, grassed waterways, conservation tillage, cover cropping and diversion terraces. He's been practicing conservation at home and on rented land since the early 1970s.

The public is invited to drive by or visit the farm to see the conservation practices. A roadside property sign identifies the Take Pride in America Conservation farm.

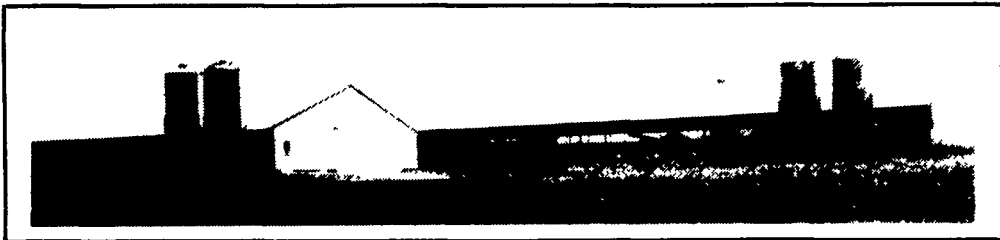
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