

# Kid's KOrner

## Students Learn About Chicks, Eggs, And Farms

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REAMSTOWN (Lancaster Co.) — Not many fourth-graders at Reamstown Elementary School live on a farm. But that doesn't mean they don't know anything about farming.

"I know there are 930 chicken farms in Lancaster County," Zach Rineer said.

He learned that fact by listening to Pennsylvania Poultry Queen Melissa Stauffer talk about chickens and eggs recently.

Melissa visited the school as part of the Ag in the Classroom program. She told about the 22,000 chickens her family raises in Ephrata.

"And she told us that eggs are good for us. They have lots of good things we need," Bobby Wertz said.

"Eggs have some fat, but we should still eat them because they are nutritious," David Bolar said.

Melissa wore a tiara and banner that shows that she is the poultry queen. Many of the students wanted to know how Melissa became poultry queen. She told them that she lived on a poultry farm, and had prepare a skit that told about the poultry industry and answer questions that a panel of judges asked her.

Melissa handed out recipe brochures of her favorite recipes using eggs and poultry.

Here are some words and definitions to learn if you would like to talk like a Poultry Producer. This information was prepared by Students for the Responsible Use of Animals.

**Broiler** — type of chicken raised for meat.

**Broiler house** — building that broiler-type chickens are raised in.

**Brooding period** — the time between when the chicks are one day old until they can be on their own without any extra heat.

**Candling** — shining a light behind eggs to check for cracks and other problems.

**Chick** — a very young chicken.

**Clutch** — the egg-laying cycle. The hen lays one egg each day for several days in a row and then does not lay for 1 or 2 days.

**Comb** — red crest on top of the head of most chickens. Roosters have large combs.

**Confinement** — keeping large numbers of chickens or other animals in cages or pens inside buildings.

**Fryer** — another name for the broiler-type chicken.

**Gizzard** — an organ located between the stomach and the intestines inside the chicken's body. The gizzard is filled with gravel and grit and grinds the food for the chicken. It serves as the chicken's teeth.

**Hatch** — the birth of a chick; when the chick breaks through the egg shell.

**Hatchery** — company that hatches chicks and sells them to farmers.

**Hen** — a grown female or mother chicken that lays eggs.

**Incubator** — machine used to keep eggs warm so chicks will hatch from eggs.

**Layer** — type of chicken raised for producing eggs.

**Poultry** — term for all the different birds that are raised on farms. Examples: turkeys, ducks, chickens.

**Poultry grower** — farmer raises poultry.

**Pullet** — a young female chicken who has never laid an egg.

**Rooster** — male or father chicken.

Did you know that the chicken does not have teeth? To grind their food, the chicken has an organ called a gizzard, which is located between the chicken's stomach and intestine. The gizzard is filled with gravel and grit and is said to be the chicken's teeth.

After eggs are laid by the hen, they are washed and checked for cracks in the shells. This is done by a method called candling. Candling is simply shining a light behind the egg so that cracks in the shell can be found and so that the inside of the egg can be checked. A trained person watches the eggs and removes those that are cracked or have something wrong inside of them.

Next, the eggs are weighed and sorted by size. All of this is done by machines. The government has set strict rules about egg sizes so the machines must be exact or the producer could have problems.

After the eggs have been washed, checked, and weighed,

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Holding a peeping chick fascinates these fourth-graders at Reamstown Elementary School.



These students ask Pennsylvania Poultry Queen Melissa Stauffer how she became a poultry queen.



There are more chickens in the world today than there are people. And the number of chickens is growing faster than the human population.



Make eggs sunny-side-up, scrambled, hard-boiled, soft-boiled — any way possible — these fellows like them all. David Bolar, 9, center; Bobby Wertz, 11, right, and other classmates at the Reamstown Elementary School.