



FACT SHEET

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Minnesota Turkey Industry Facts

- Minnesota currently is ranked #1 for turkey production in the United States.
- Minnesota's turkey farmers raised approximately 44.5 million birds in 2005, bringing more than \$600 million in income for producers, processors and other related industries.
- Minnesota has approximately 250 turkey producers who operate 600 turkey farms.
- The majority of turkeys raised in Minnesota are more likely to be shipped outside the state.
 - Ninety (90) percent of turkey products processed in state are exported out of Minnesota.
 - Of that 90 percent, approximately 15 percent are exported to international markets.
 - The top five export markets for U.S. turkey meat (2005) were: Mexico, China, Canada, Russia and Taiwan.
- The top seven (7) turkey-producing counties in Minnesota (2002 statistics) are:
 - Kandiyohi – 6.51 million turkeys
 - Stearns – 4.6 million turkeys
 - Swift – 4.44 million turkeys
 - Morrison – 3.4 million turkeys
 - Todd – 3.06 million turkeys
 - Meeker – 2.96 million turkeys
 - Ottertail – 2.86 million turkeys
- Minnesota's top 3 counties also are ranked in the top 10 for largest turkey-producing counties in the U.S. – Kandiyohi (#5), Stearns (#9) and Swift (#10), according to 2005 figures from the National Turkey Federation.
- As the nation's largest producer and processor of turkey, Minnesota is home to four turkey processing companies with a total of eight processing plants around the state.
 - Jennie-O Turkey Store, the world's largest processor of turkey, owns plants in Willmar, Melrose, Montevideo, Pelican Rapids and Faribault, with one additional plant in Barron, Wisconsin. Jennie-O Turkey Store handles approximately 1.265 billion pounds of turkey annually (2005) and is a subsidiary of Hormel Foods Corp. Its Minnesota plants employ about 5,300 workers, producing annual sales of \$750 million and total economic activity of more than \$2 billion.
 - Northern Pride, Inc., a growers cooperative, owns one plant in Thief River Falls.
 - Turkey Valley Farms opened one plant in Marshall in March 2005.
 - North Star Foods – one plant in St. Charles.

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Minnesota Turkey Production Statistics

- The average turkey producer raises three flocks per year. Each of these flocks is an average size of about 15,000 birds.
- Every Minnesota turkey generates \$11.68 of direct economic activity to the state, according to a 2003 University of Minnesota study.
- In addition to well over \$500 million in economic activity, the industry and its related businesses support 26,000 jobs in Minnesota.
- Turkeys annually consume \$74 million of corn and \$90 million of soybean meal, adding approximately \$198 million to the value of corn and soybeans in Minnesota.
- Corn and soybean production to supply turkey producers employs the equivalent of 1,767 cash grain producers and employees.

Modern Production Facts

- In the Midwest, ground corn and soybean meal are the major components of feed for turkeys. Other ingredients may be partially substituted for the corn and soybean meal, and minerals and vitamin supplements are added to a turkey's diet. Feed and fresh water are available continuously to the turkeys.
- On average, it takes 75-80 pounds of feed to raise a 30-pound tom turkey.
- Today's turkey production methods have shortened the time it takes to bring turkeys to maturity. Male (toms) and female (hens) commercial turkeys are grown separately due to their distinctly different growth rates. Age or size at marketing is determined by the type of meat product to be sold.
- The majority of hen turkeys will be marketed at 14 -16 lbs. (12-15 wks of age) and the remainder as heavy hens weighing 20-22 lbs. (20 weeks of age). Most of the hens will be marketed as whole birds for consumers.
- Toms are primarily marketed after reaching 32 lbs., and many are marketed at 40 lbs. (at 20 weeks of age) to be used in production of further-processed meat products, such as turkey ham, deli meat and breast meat roasts.
- A comparison of tom and hen performance from a national survey shows the large difference in weight and feed conversion (pounds of feed per pound of gain) at different ages:

Age	Body Wt (lbs.)	Feed:Gain	Total Feed Intake (lbs.)
Hens, 314 wks	14.2	2.23	32.39
Toms, 16 wks	27.3	2.35	64.61
Toms, 20 wks	37.7	2.802.83	102

National Turkey Facts

- An estimated 266.5 million turkeys will be raised in the United States in 2006 compared to 256 million 2005.
- Turkey production in the United States has more than tripled since 1970, meeting consumers' demand as more people choose turkey. With the value added to turkey through processing into a wide variety of cuts, parts and further processed products, the total value of turkey processors' production in 1999 was more than \$7.8 billion.

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- Turkey exports are an increasingly important aspect of U.S. turkey production, especially for turkey parts and dark meat products. Total U.S. export value of turkey in 2005 was \$388.6 million – an increase from \$299.2 million in 2005.
- In 2005, nearly 569.4 million pounds were exported. Exports now comprise 10 percent of total turkey production, compared with just over 2 percent in 1990.
- The top five export markets for U.S. turkey meat (2005) were: Mexico, China, Canada, Russia and Taiwan

Turkey Health & Well-Being

- All turkeys are hormone and steroid free. No hormones are approved for use in turkeys.
- FDA approved antibiotics are used at times to help suppress microorganisms, prevent disease and ensure that consumers receive a healthy product. A withdrawal period is required after the time the antibiotic is administered and before the turkey can be processed. The Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) of the USDA monitors the administration of antibiotics and randomly tests flocks of turkeys for residues. Therefore, consumers can be assured that turkeys do not contain antibiotic residues when they go to market.
- Turkeys are raised in scientifically designed, environmentally controlled barns that provide maximum protection from predators, disease and bad weather. Turkeys roam freely around the barn.
- No one cares more for a turkey than a turkey farmer. Research has shown that to mistreat a turkey would be to the economic detriment of the grower. A well-treated turkey will grow to its full potential and provide consumers with a low-fat and high-protein source. In short, the Minnesota Turkey Growers Association does not condone the mistreatment of turkeys.
- Proper handling of turkey litter is an important element of any turkey farm waste management system. Turkey litter is a mixture of bedding and manure that contains nutrients of value to growing plants and crops. It is best recycled as fertilizer. Alternatively, litter can be composted and sold as fertilizer in specialized markets such as horticultural products.
- A new alternative system for turkey litter handling will soon be available for farmers which uses combustion technology to convert litter to electricity. Fibrominn is building such a plant in Benson, MN, with limited deliveries expected to begin in 2007.
- With any flock, some turkeys die before marketing. This mortality may be the result of poor health, genetic inadequacies or accidental injury. It is important that this mortality be handled in a manner to prevent environmental pollution and potential disease spread.
- Current statutes allow for four types of disposal: burial, incineration, rendering and composting. The Minnesota Board of Animal Health has a set of rules for the use of each of these methods.

Nutrition Facts

- A 3-ounce serving of boneless, skinless turkey breast contains 26 grams of protein, 1 gram of fat and 0 grams of saturated fat. That's 8% more protein and less total fat per portion than boneless skinless chicken breast or trimmed top loin beef steak.
- Turkey is naturally low in sodium, containing less than 25 milligrams per ounce on average.
- Turkey is low in cholesterol.

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Consumer Statistics

- Ninety-seven (97) percent of Americans surveyed by the National Turkey Federation eat turkey at Thanksgiving.
- The average weight of turkeys purchased for Thanksgiving is 15 pounds, meaning that approximately 690 million pounds of turkey were consumed in the United States during Thanksgiving in 2005.
- Increased efficiency in turkey production has meant turkey is an excellent food value for consumers. In fact, the price of turkeys dropped approximately 4.5% per year between 1949 and 1993, with this trend continuing today.
- Turkey prices do not normally increase at supermarkets during Thanksgiving. In fact, turkey prices often go down during the holidays as many grocery stores use turkey as a “loss leader.” This means that retailers can run special, low prices on turkeys to entice customers into their store to buy other holiday foods for the traditional feast. Turkeys in the supermarket are all inspected by USDA or state systems and offer high quality and value.
- In 1920, U.S. turkey growers produced one turkey for every 29 persons in the country. Today, turkey growers produce nearly one turkey for every person in the country.
- In 2006, U.S. consumption of turkey is estimated to be 16.6 pounds per person.
- Turkey consumption has increased 113 percent since 1975, due to consumers’ recognition of turkey’s good taste and nutritional value.
- Fifth (50) percent of all turkey consumed in 1970 was during the holidays. Today, holidays account for only 32 percent of total consumption.
- Nationally, bagged whole bird sales account for 25 percent of total turkey sales.
- The product distribution for turkey is as follows: 41.1 percent sold to grocery stores and other retail outlets; 23.1 percent sold in commodity outlets; 21.6 percent sold to foodservice outlets; and 10 percent exported.
- The most popular turkey product continues to be the whole turkey, comprising a quarter of all sales. However, many turkey products are tailor-made for today’s consumers who live fast-paced lifestyles and who demand products that taste great, are healthful and easy to prepare. As a result, several other turkey products are closing in on the whole bird’s dominance in the marketplace.
 - Ground turkey has experienced the largest sales growth among consumers in the last decade.
 - Pre-cooked turkey products, including deli breast, turkey ham and turkey bacon, continue to be consumer favorites as well.
 - Raw products, especially breast cuts, such as tenderloins and cutlets, also are seeing an increase in sales.
- In 2005, the average retail price for whole frozen turkeys in the United States was \$1.07 per pound.

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Sources: Minnesota Turkey Research & Promotion Council, National Turkey Federation, University of Minnesota, USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, Agricultural Utilization Research Institute.