

## Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1937.

(FOR BROADCAST ONLY)

SUBJECT: "NEWS NOTES FROM WASHINGTON." Information from the Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

---oooOooo---

Our Washington correspondent reports in her letter this week some turkey and cranberry news. But she insists that she hasn't mixed her dates and isn't rushing the season.

"I know it's only September," she writes, "and I'm well aware that Thanksgiving is 2 whole months away. But my news won't keep that long. I have just gathered some interesting facts about turkeys from the poultry specialists here at the Department of Agriculture and I have also happened on some news about the 1937 cranberry crop. So if you don't mind my being a little forehanded, I'll pass this news along today.

"The first news I have should interest not only the farmer who sells turkeys but also the housewife who buys them. Mr. S. J. Marsden of the Bureau of Animal Industry says that a good way to tell when a turkey is ready for roasting is by the pinfeathers--or rather by the lack of pinfeathers. So he advises farmers to look for pinfeathers when they examine their turkeys for market. If all the feathers are fairly well grown out, the bird has probably reached maturity and should be in market condition. Turkeys for roasting are ready for market only at maturity--that is, generally 24 to 28 weeks after hatching. Pinfeathers show that the bird has not yet reached roasting-age and they have other disadvantages. They make the job of picking very difficult. And unless time and effort is spent in removing them all, the turkey carcass looks unattractive.

"Perhaps you would like to know why a mature bird-- or 'finished' bird as the poultry specialists say--why a mature bird makes the best eating. Mr. Marsden gives 2 reasons. He says first that an immature bird has a little or no fat. And fat is necessary to give full juiciness and finest flavor to roast turkey or any other roast meat. Also fat is necessary for good gravy, sauces and dressing. Another reason for waiting until the bird is mature to send it to market is that the turkey takes on its full amount of breast and leg meat in the last 4 to 8 weeks of feeding.

"By the way, more and more turkeys from American farms are going to market with their grade certified by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. And the 3 U. S. Grades for turkeys, in order of their quality requirements, are: U.S. Special; U.S. Prime; and U.S. Choice.



"U. S. Choice turkeys are plentiful in the markets to meet the purse of the housewife with a more modest budget. The quality of this grade is just below that of Prime. And the principal difference between the two grades is that the breast in Choice may not be so well fleshed nor the carcass so well covered with fat. More skin abrasions or discolorations are permitted, but no bird can have more than 3 of such defects and still get this grading.

"Speaking of turkeys reminds me of the survey the Bureau of Agricultural Economics has just finished--a survey of the live-poultry industry in New York City. If you aren't up on the poultry business, you may be surprised to know that the live-poultry industry buys 42 million dollars' worth of poultry from farmers in a year, moves these birds into New York City, and slaughters and prepares nearly 400 million pounds of poultry for the kitchen.

"However the economists found that the amount of live poultry entering New York City is somewhat smaller than the amount of dressed poultry, and that the tendency in recent years has been toward less live and more dressed poultry. According to the survey, cost is the reason for this tendency. The average cost of handling and transporting poultry from the place of first sale in the country to the retail store in New York is about 10 cents a pound for dressed poultry, but 12 cents a pound for poultry shipped alive.

"Now just a little item about cranberries. Apparently we are going to have plenty of cranberries this fall. Unofficial estimates have set the 1937 crop of cranberries on southeastern Massachusetts bogs at better than 500 thousand barrels compared with an average crop of around 400 thousand barrels. The average crop of cranberries for the whole United States for 1928 to 1932 was 580 thousand barrels."

That concludes this week's news letter from our Department of Agriculture reporter.

\*\*\*\*\*

