If you are starting to run out of starter feed, you can switch to grower feed. It is important to remember, however, that chickens prefer the kind of food to which they have become accustomed and a major change in diet can result in problems -- unless the new diet is similar in texture, color, and probably taste to the previous one. Feed a mixture of the old and new feeds reducing the amount of old feed in the mix until it is used up. This will give the chicks time to get accustomed to the new feed.

Remember: As your chicks grow they will need more living space. Continue providing feed and clean water daily.

POULTRY PRODUCTION IN FLORIDA

As you recall, the term “poultry” refers to a number of different domesticated avian species including chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, pigeons, quail, pheasants and many more. The commercial poultry industry in Florida primarily involves chickens, either for meat or eggs. Florida does not have a commercial turkey industry. It does have relatively small game bird (primarily Bobwhite quail) and ratite (ostriches and emus) industries.

Broilers (also called fryers or frying chickens) are meat-type chickens usually marketed at 4-10 weeks of age depending on the body weight desired. Broilers are used for products such as Cornish Hens (about 4 wk of age and 2.85 lb), chicken for fast food restaurants (about 6 wk of age and 4.1 lb), chicken for grocery stores (about 7.5 wk of age and 6.0 lb), and deboned chicken for sandwiches, nuggets, etc. (about 8.5 wk of age and 6.5 lb). Increasingly, further-processed products like microwave oven-ready or marinated items are being developed and marketed.

The broiler industry in the U.S. is vertically integrated. That is, typically the broilers are produced and marketed by firms which own or control breeder flocks, hatcheries, broiler flocks, feed mills, processing plants, and market arrangements. While there are some company-owned farms, birds (both broiler and breeder flocks) are typically managed by farmers under contract and under supervision of the company. The farmer provides land, labor, houses, litter, equipment, taxes, utilities, and insurance. Contracts provide a base amount and reward efficiency and quality of product with bonuses. The company furnishes birds, feed, vaccines, drugs, and supervision.

Florida ranks as the 16th state in broiler production. In 1999, 122 million broilers were grown in Florida, giving a total of 647.7 million pounds of product worth $246 million. Despite this relatively large volume of broiler production, Florida produces only about a half of the state’s consumption. The rest is supplied by states such as Alabama, Georgia and the Carolinas.

Florida ranks as the 11th state in table egg production. The commercial egg industry in Florida is presently comprised of six companies. These egg companies own or contract all of Florida’s 10 million plus laying hens. Most of Florida’s commercial egg flocks are located on large in-line, company-owned complexes. The exception is one company which produce all of its eggs off-line through contract growers, much like the broiler industry. Several of the companies are multi-state companies with egg production complexes in Alabama and/or Georgia.

Florida egg production in the production year of December 1, 1998 to November 30, 1999 was 2,772 million eggs and was valued at $108 million. Florida is basically self-sufficient in eggs in that it producers approximately the same number of eggs that is consumed. When demand dictates, Florida imports or exports eggs to supply demands for different egg sizes. The demand for eggs in Florida is somewhat seasonal, being greatest during the winter months.
CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS
1. Developing chick still in the shell
3. Feline predator that is best kept away from chicks
4. Domesticated birds raised for food, clothing or fun
7. Digit on the foot (Most chickens have 4, although some have 5)
8. Usually provided for hens to lay eggs in
11. Opposite of go
12. Covering for a pot
14. Opposite of yes
15. Partner for either
17. Approximate

DOWN
1. Reproductive material of the chicken
2. Areas where young chicks are raised
3. Container for holding eggs
5. Common egg-laying breed of chicken
6. Outer covering on chickens
9. A nutritious breakfast item
10. Young female chicken
13. A specific day of the year
16. An adult female chicken or turkey

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