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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Tuesday, October 4, 1938

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS." Information from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and the Biological Survey, United States Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

In the mailbag this week is a letter from a listener who wants to know if the Department of Agriculture is doing anything to "bring back" the vanishing wild turkeys that were once so numerous in this country.

So I'm glad to have an answer from the Department's Biological Survey-- a report that plans are underway for upland game areas which will make its refuges as much of a haven for upland birds as the marsh areas now are for ducks, geese and other water birds. And the first upland bird scheduled for attention is the wild turkey. Next spring Survey men expect to start rearing experiments with one of the purest strains of wild turkeys left in this country-- the Santee turkey of South Carolina. They hope to restock refuges and other areas with this eastern turkey which sportsmen say has lost none of its original wildness. In the wild country of the Santee River bottoms there has been little chance for domestic and wild stock to interbreed.

In the early days of this Nation, the wild turkey was found from New England to the southern Rocky Mountains. Benjamin Franklin proposed the wild turkey rather than the eagle for our national emblem. But today the turkey has gone from most of this range. From the few that are left in the South and Southwest the conservationists hope to restock other areas.

Here's how the Survey men get young turkeys for restocking. They select wild turkey hens and clip their wings. They put these in 3 or 4-acre pens in natural turkey range. During the mating season wild gobblers visit the pens. The wildest of the young poults the biologists use for restocking. These birds adapt themselves to range conditions and provide even better hunting than some of the birds raised in the wild. Hunters report that they do not respond readily to the turkey call, probably because they are not brooded by turkey hens. One of the difficulties with captive reared birds has been that when they are freed, they often prefer to stay in civilized surroundings.

Another questioner this week asks about meat inspection. She says: "About how much meat in this country has Federal inspection?"

Answer: About 70 million meat animals get inspected by the Department of Agriculture each year; that is, about two-thirds of the country's meat supply receives a thorough inspection both before and at the time of slaughter by one or more trained veterinarians--graduates of accredited colleges.



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The present meat-inspection law was enacted in 1906. This law provides that the Federal meat inspection must include all meats and meat food products of establishments that ship their products in interstate or export trade. The law exempts farmers from Federal inspection, and to some extent local butchers and meat dealers who ship their products across State lines in serving their customers.

You may be interested to know the 7 essential parts to Federal meat inspection. These are: sanitation of the establishment; inspection before slaughter; post-mortem inspection; products inspection; laboratory inspection; disposal of condemned material; and proper labeling. Although most livestock offered for slaughter is healthy, inspectors find about 50 diseases or abnormal conditions that prevent animals or their carcasses from receiving a clean bill of health.

A glimpse into the history of Federal meat inspection shows that it began because European governments to whom we wanted to ship meat looked with disfavor on United States' meat because there was no official evidence that it came from healthy animals. So in 1890 Congress established a meat-inspection service. Shortly afterward this service was broadened to apply to all slaughtering establishments that prepare meat food for interstate as well as foreign trade.

Another listener inquires about Federal inspection of fruits and vegetables.

This newer inspection service was first offered in 1923 and has been steadily growing. Last year over 450 thousand carlots of fruits and vegetables were inspected at their shipping points.

More potatoes are certified as to grade than any other vegetable or fruit at present. Under marketing agreements covering most of the important late-potato-producing States from Michigan to Idaho, shipping-point inspection was required of potatoes shipped from Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, the coastal region of Texas, and the two western counties of Florida. This inspection was based on prescribed minimum standards under potato agreements of these Gulf States. Even more potatoes will probably be inspected this year if the late potato States adopt the marketing agreement now under consideration.

This shipping-point grading service makes it possible for produce-buyers to purchase by wire on the basis of Government certificates even though the fruits or vegetables they are buying may be shipped at a point several hundred miles distant.

Last question. A listener wants a recipe for ginger pear preserves. You'll find it on page 11 of Farmers' Bulletin No. 1800. And you can have a copy by writing to the U. S. Department of Agriculture at Washington, D. C., and asking for the bulletin called "Homenade Jellies, Jams, and Preserves." Again, the number is 1800. And it's free as long as the supply holds out.

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