



# Poultry

You have decided to take on a poultry project to show at the County Fair and are wondering, “What do I do now?”

There are a few things that need to be done; first you will have to decide what type of poultry project you want to show at the fair.

Choices include Chickens, Ducks, Geese, Turkeys Pigeons or Guineas. Keep in mind that all birds have to be hatched after January 1st of the year you’re going to show the birds.

A Statement of Origin is required for Chickens, Turkeys and Guineas. Ducks and Geese do not require a Statement of Origin but if you can get one it is a good idea to have it.

An example Statement of Origin is included. If you buy birds from a hatchery, ask for one and they will include it with your bird order. If you buy birds from a breeder, bring one for the breeder to sign or send it to the breeder for them to sign.

## PIGEONS

Pigeons may be entered in three classes; Sporting, Fancy or Utility, depending on their breed. They can be shown either as a mated pair for birds older than one year or as a young bird for birds hatched during the current year. Pigeons must be banded with seamless bands to be shown.

If you are a 4-H Cloverbud you will only need to bring one bird to the fair. I recommend a gentle breed of chicken like a Rhode Island Red or a Wyandotte. A duck like a Pekin will also work if you spend some time with it before the fair so that it is tame.

Once you are older than a Cloverbud you then can show two birds or a trio depending on the project you wish to take on.

### **Two Birds are needed in:**

Brown and White Egg laying pens and Market pens

### **Three Birds are needed in:**

Breeding Pens which consist of one male and two females of the same breed.

If you are showing for the first time I would recommend an Egg Laying Pen. The hens should be laying eggs by the time the fair starts. Brown egg layers are generally calmer than white egg layers. The best brown egg layers are a hybrid breed such as a Gold or Red Star birds. To ensure your birds are laying by the start of the fair, I would purchase chicks within the first two weeks of March. A close second for beginners to show would be a pen of Market Chickens. Market chickens are the Cornish Cross birds. The two birds should be 4 to 4.5 lbs by the time of the fair and it generally takes eight weeks for them to reach this weight.

When showing Egg Layers or Market Birds they should look and weigh as close to the same as possible.

The birds should be given baths before the fair. I would recommend two times at a minimum this not only cleans the birds but the more you handle them the calmer they will be for the show.

If you want to show a Breeding Trio at the fair, birds that are more mature are better. Hatching between January 1st and March 1st is best. Keep in mind that the hatch date has to be after January 1st of the year you're going to show them. The judge will be judging the birds against the "American Standard of Perfection". This book can usually be found at your local library. You will want to show one male that most closely resembles that breed's standards. The two females should also closely resemble that breed's standards. The birds must be of the same breed and color variety and must be purebred.

On show day at the fair you should wear a white long sleeve shirt, black pants and black shoes. You will want keep your eyes on the judge at all times when showing your birds.