

Turkeys



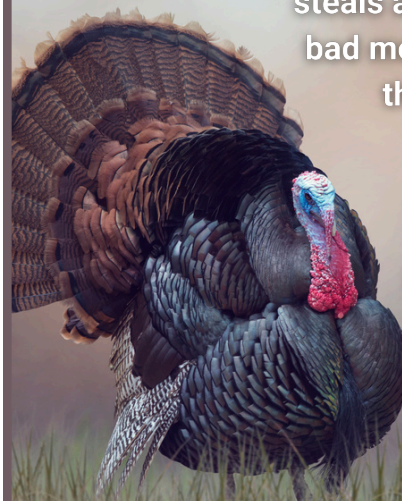
Turkeys are large birds that are native to North America and have been here for millions of years. Turkeys were first domesticated in Mexico around 2,000 years ago and are still raised for their meat today. Turkey is not just a popular protein to eat during our fall and winter holidays.

Today, turkey is eaten year round on sandwiches, salads, and more. In fact, the average American eats almost 15 pounds of turkey every year. More than 210 million turkeys are raised on around 2,500 farms each year in the United States.



The turkeys we raise today look very different from their wild ancestors. The Eastern Wild Turkey is the only wild turkey species in Illinois. They have brown feathers and can fly. They even sleep in trees to protect themselves against predators. The Broad-Breasted Turkey is one of the most common turkeys raised for meat. It has white feathers and can't fly because it is larger and has more meat on its body.

After seeing the eagle design of the Great Seal, Benjamin Franklin wrote in a note to his daughter that since the bald eagle steals a lot of food, it has bad moral character, but that the turkey is "a much more respectable bird ...a true original native of America ...and is a bird of courage."





Meet the Yordy Family

Yordy Turkey Farm | Morton, IL



Tell us about your farm.

Our farm is over 90 years old. We raise 10,000 turkeys every year on our farm in Morton, IL. We are a large family that works together to provide fresh, all natural Thanksgiving turkeys to families across the state and country.

What kind of turkeys do you raise and why did you choose these breeds?

We raise a breed called Nicholas turkeys, which are all white. All of our turkeys are females (hens). Sometimes, we get a few male turkeys (toms) that quickly become much larger than the rest of the females. Nicholas turkeys are a breed of turkey that grow quickly and have a higher meat yield.



The facility has temperature and humidity controls to keep the free roaming turkeys happy and healthy.

All photos on this page courtesy of Yordy Turkey Farm

Do you raise your turkeys from chicks or do you hatch them on the farm?

We get all of our turkeys the day they are born from a large hatchery in Indiana. This happens in July. Once we bring them home, they are raised directly on our farm, allowing us to personally oversee and maintain their entire life cycle.

What kind of housing and food do you provide your turkeys?

All of our turkeys are raised in a large, open range facility with soft bedding and automatic dispensers for water and feed. They are able to roam around and get their food and water throughout the facility as needed. We also grow 1,500 acres of corn on our farm, which we feed to our turkeys so they have a healthy, all natural food source.