

# U.S. POULTRY & EGGS

## A GLOBAL LEADER IN SUSTAINABILITY

### In Brief:

- Improving sustainability in U.S. poultry and egg production means not only focusing on bird health and welfare, but also reducing costs and maximizing productivity and addressing any societal concerns. The heritage of the family farm and the importance of the land have allowed the poultry and egg industries to take the lead in the development of sustainable practices as a core principle to maintain a safe and secure food supply and in fundamentally preserving hundreds of rural economies in many states across the country.

### Environmental Stewardship: A commitment to continuous improvement

- When converted to “CO2 equivalents” the total emissions by the U.S. broiler industry is 5.77 tonnes per 1,000 broilers marketed, which is about 0.6% of the GHG attributed to agricultural and less than 0.1% of the total global greenhouse gases.
- In 2014, U.S. poultry farmers used 454 grams (1 pound) of feed to produce one pound of chicken – down from 2 kilograms (4.7 pounds) in 1925. This correlates to a reduction of over 7.3 million hectares (18 million acres) of land used to produce corn and soybeans.
- A recent 50-year study examined U.S. egg production from 1960-2010 to evaluate environmental performance measures and concluded that:
  - The egg production process releases significantly less polluting emissions, including 71% lower greenhouse gas emissions.
  - Hens now use 32% less water per dozen eggs produced.
  - Today’s hens use a little over half the amount of feed to produce a dozen eggs.
  - At the same time, today’s hens produce 27% more eggs per day and are living longer.

Compared to 1960, today it takes

**32% Less Water**

to produce a dozen eggs



The volume of water conserved would fill

**3,716**  
olympic-sized swimming pools

- U.S. egg farmers across the country have made advancements in hen housing, including improved building ventilation, temperature control, better lighting and a more secure housing environment, helping to ensure that hens are protected from disease-carrying wildlife.
- Manure management has played a role in minimizing the egg industry’s environmental footprint. The vast majority of manure from laying hens is recycled into crop production, providing nutrients for plants, contributing to healthy soils, saving energy and reducing commercial fertilizer use.



For more information please see:  
[thesustainabilityalliance.us](http://thesustainabilityalliance.us) or contact  
[info@thesustainabilityalliance.us](mailto:info@thesustainabilityalliance.us)



## Social Responsibility: A commitment to future generations

- The vast majority of poultry farms in the U.S. are owned and operated by families. Contrary to the misconception that farms are industrial operations owned by large corporations, family farms make up 97% of all American farms.
- Chicken, turkey and ducks are among the most widely distributed food animals in the world and are part of every major cuisine.
- The U.S. poultry industry aids in sustainable food production in Haiti by helping to build and sustain a poultry cooperative that produces chicken for the local people.



- The U.S. population has increased by 72% over the past 50 years, but efficiencies in egg production have enabled U.S. egg farmers to meet the demands of the growing population with just 18% more hens.
- America's egg farmers produce a high-quality product that provides all-natural, high-quality protein; and according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), eggs are now 14% lower in cholesterol (down from 215 mg to 185 mg) and 64% higher in vitamin D.

## Economic Profitability: A commitment to long-term viability

- The United States alone consumes 8 billion chickens a year, and approximately 250 eggs per capita.
- In 2014, the combined value of production from broilers, eggs, turkeys and the value of sales from chickens in the U.S. was \$48.3 billion, up 9% from \$44.4 billion in 2013.
- The total economic impact of the U.S. poultry industry, including supplier and induced impact, is \$470 billion, and about \$32.9 billion in taxes.
- U.S. poultry farmers involved in the production and processing of poultry provide 1,814,200 jobs that pay \$100.2 billion in wages to families throughout the country.
- The U.S. egg industry has added nearly 15 eggs per capita in consumption over the last five years.
- The value of all U.S. egg production in 2014 was \$10.2 billion, up 17% from \$8.68 billion in 2013.
- In 2014, the U.S. egg industry had a 27.4% increase in U.S. egg exports, representing \$337 million in value.

## Resources

---

Xin H., Gates R. S., Green A. R., Mitloehner F. M., Moore P. A. Jr., Wathes C. M. 2011. Environmental impacts and sustainability of egg production systems. *Poult. Sci.* 90:267–277.

Thornton G., US poultry industry to track sustainability, tell story. *WATT PoultryUSA*, August 2014.

Infographic: The Egg Business. American Egg Board, 2015. <http://www.aeb.org/images/PDFs/EggBusiness515.pdf>.

---



For more information please see:  
[thesustainabilityalliance.us](http://thesustainabilityalliance.us) or contact  
[info@thesustainabilityalliance.us](mailto:info@thesustainabilityalliance.us)

