

Re: costs of feed !

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- *From:* A_L_P <hay_hell_pea@xxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Thu, 08 May 2008 21:21:13 +1200
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Jill wrote:

A_L_P wrote:

Restrictions on the use of table and restaurant scraps must have made a difference to the nutrients available, compared with the "old days" when chooks were like compost heaps – you put your spare edibles into the chooks and got eggs & chicken meat.

Yes and no

One has to be wary about comparing apples and pears.

In the "old days" commercial compound feed was already available for the big units, I have adverts for it in 1920's manuals. And then they added more fishmeal and meat meal and bone meal and limestone and iodine and phosferine – and all manner of additives !!! <grin> these old books are wonderful.

Agreed. I've got a small collection of old recipe and household management books and one of amazing recipes for everything from fireworks to ink to – oh, no end of things. Most of the ingredients completely impossible to obtain in small quantities – or at all – today.

But I was thinking of even earlier times, in NZ the earliest European settlers in the early half of the 19th century. Chickens would have been brought here as early as possible, i.e. by the first settlers, though probably not by the early sealers and whalers who did not intend to make their homes here. They are fairly easy to transport by ship and are easy to carry even without roads, to whatever out-of-the way place their owners were heading for, and they produce results quickly, you don't have to wait for long gestation then a long growing and fattening period.

There's a photo on

<http://history-nz.org/colonisation1.html> captioned "Group outside a timber camp hut, circa 1900. Shows two women peeling potatoes, a man, a dog and chickens. Photograph taken by the Northwood Brothers."

Re: costs of feed !

In the "old days" in the domestic situation all the waste was boiled up with lots of meat and other protein. There was little surplus carbs like we have now. They were needed to fill human bellies up !!

In the "old days" in the domestic situation one was not looking at birds who were as productive if they were scratching around the yard. But if they cost little to feed then the quality of the protein was well worth it.

In the "old days" chicken as a meat was a relative rarity – not something that was eaten several times a week.

My parents killed off the chooks after the first year's laying. Later they got a bit more easy-going and kept them 2 years. Nonetheless since the most they ever kept were a dozen (and the pullets coming along) poultry was a special treat. Birthdays, Christmas. Steamed or simmered first then roasted to tender golden perfection – and that real flavour that wasn't remotely like cotton wool.

Even so my parents had a tin of "meat meal" which got added to the feed sometimes. Don't ask me when or why: that was of no interest to me at the time.

It was great stuff.

I'd be surprised if many chooks, household chooks anyway, lived on grain.

Indeed, the scattering of the grain was a supplement, as it should be.

They were like the pig, low-cost producers converting unwanted stuff to valuable food. Well, that's what I knew in New Zealand when I was growing up. Things have changed a lot since then. Battery farming for instance. May the gods rot those who profit from it, starting at the toenails & dandruff and working steadily till the rot meets in the middle.

<grin>

Battery farming has been around for over 150 years.

And its not the producers fault that the human population has increased so much with the associated demand for food.

Battery farming is not the fault of those who run them, its the fault of the humans who demand the food they produce.

Maybe Bird flu will be the chickens revenge !! reduce the human population to a level whereby we do have sufficient land and stockmen to be able to put outside the birds we need to support the numbers of humans that are left.

Re: costs of feed !

;@)

Go Gaia! The Gaia hypothesis seems to have a few things going for it, the way war, plagues and "Acts of God" affect the most stressed parts of the world most frequently. A re-balancing system underlying the human-directed layer of activities on the planet, a series of "equal and opposite reactions" that push the humans back to harmless levels every now and then..... If nothing else it's comforting science fiction – balance again, counteracting all the doom-mongers!

A L P

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