



This project will introduce you to the poultry industry and how to select, raise, care for, and exhibit poultry. Interested in learning about chickens, turkeys, ducks or geese? Would you like to raise chickens to exhibit, or use for egg and meat production for your own small business? If so, check out the poultry project!



## Exploring 4-H Poultry

### Spark Activity: Chicken or Egg - What Comes First?

Have you ever wondered if an egg is still good past the “best by” date on the carton? Did you know that you can check an egg for freshness?

You can by placing an egg in a bowl of water. If the egg lays on its side at the bottom, it is still quite fresh. If the egg stands upright on the bottom, it is still fine to eat, but it should be eaten very soon or hard-boiled. If the egg floats to the top, it’s past its prime, and not good for eating.

A white egg is white on the outside and inside. What color is the inside of a green egg? How about a brown egg?



## 4-H Project Levels and Goals

### Beginner

- Learn the different types of birds and what they’re used for
- Identify different breeds
- Locate and name parts of a bird
- Learn about poultry nutrition, feeding, health, and daily care
- Learn poultry showing basics and be a good sport when showing your animals

### Intermediate

- Learn more about nutrients by reading a feed tag
- Compare poultry carcasses and grading
- Explore the difference between class, breed and variety
- Discover how eggs are made by practicing how to candle an egg
- Understand signs of a healthy bird and how to prevent poultry diseases

### Advanced

- Conduct a judging clinic or hold a quiz bowl
- Managing your flock
- Investigate poultry DNA and genetics
- Research poultry processing and food safety from farm to table
- Investigate poultry related careers

## Put Your Project Into Action

### Show Your Skills

- Exhibit at your county 4-H show / fair
- Give a 4-H talk or demonstration about poultry
- Junior Poultry competition at the IL State Fair
- Invite members of your 4-H club to your home to show them how you care for your animals

### Service and Leadership

- Develop a biosecurity plan for your county 4-H poultry members
- Build an incubator and hatch chicks for your 4-H club or other youth organization
- Volunteer to help at the county fair poultry show
- Organize a poultry exhibit /showmanship clinic
- Invite 4-H members to tour your poultry operation; conduct an egg judging event
- Lead a poultry workshop(s) on poultry handling, selection and/or feeding

### Entrepreneurship

- Design a business card or marketing brochure for your farm or imaginary farm
- Visit and then order eggs from a hatchery and hatch your own chickens or other poultry
- Market eggs from your chicken project – first call IDOA and ask about any permits needed
- Write a business plan for managing hens and selling eggs to local businesses and individuals

### Technology Connection

- Sensors that monitor temperature, ventilation, or ammonia and carbon dioxide levels in hen houses
- Robots that assist with repetitive tasks like cleaning or collecting eggs
- Read about presentations at Poultry Tech Summit

### Connecting with a Mentor

- Job shadow a local veterinarian
- Visit with the University of Illinois Animal Science or Veterinary Science at <https://ansc.illinois.edu/>
- Attend a poultry show and observe the judges and their techniques

### Events

- 4-H workshops, SPIN clubs and shows
- Illinois 4-H Poultry Judging Content
- State 4-H Junior Livestock Conference
- Events hosted by local FFA chapters
- U.S. Egg & Poultry Association and American Poultry Association events
- Farm Progress Show



### Careers for People Interested in Poultry

|                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Farmer                | Teacher                |
| Poultry Scientist     | Veterinarian           |
| Agricultural Business | Food Safety Specialist |
| Agriculture Science   | Poultry Researcher     |

## Start a Conversation

What did you learn from doing this project that you didn't know before?

What did you learn about yourself by doing this project?

What are some ways you can continue to learn new things about this project?

What did you learn by participating in this project that will help you in the future?

## Want to learn more?

[go.illinois.edu/4Hpoultry](https://go.illinois.edu/4Hpoultry)

## Explore more at Illinois 4-H!

[4-h.extension.illinois.edu](https://4-h.extension.illinois.edu)



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**Credits:** Fuson, Leigh. Let's Learn About Chickens! An Introduction to the Poultry Project. Tennessee 4-H Youth Development | Beyond the Barn Door. (2020, April 17) Illinois Ag in the Classroom | University of Florida Extension | University of Wyoming Extension | University of California Extension | Iowa State University Extension and Outreach | Michigan State University Extension. 4-H Project Sheets. Retrieved on 2020, May 22. | University of Illinois Extension staff that contributed to this resource include Carissa Davis, Patty Huffer, Amy Hyde, Sharon Lounsberry, Annette Reese and Amy Zepp | 4-H Spark Sheets are a collaborative effort of 4-H staff, volunteers, alumni and teens from across Illinois. A big thanks to the many contributors and reviewers!