



Facilities for Poultry

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Keeping Poultry

- Poultry make great additions to the farmstead or backyard.
- **Check with the zoning department** prior to bringing any animals to your location.
- Due to the abundance of wild animals and unpredictable weather in most areas in Florida, chickens and other **poultry need a safe and sanitary structure** for them to spend the night.

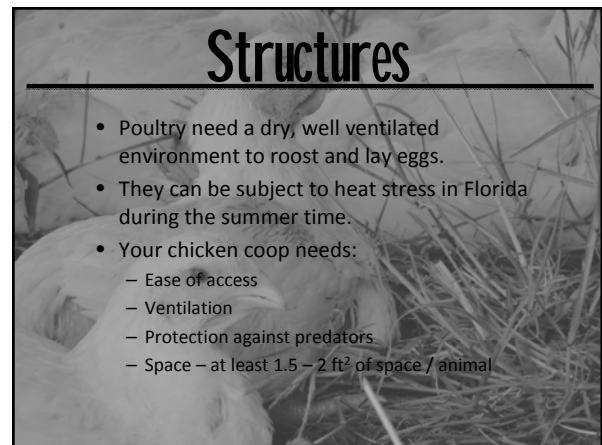
Our Chickens are prey!

- Wild animals such as these can greatly threaten your flock:
 - Bobcat
 - Raccoons
 - Opossums
 - Fox
 - Bear
 - Panther
 - Coyote
 - Raptors
 - Snakes
 - Your neighbors



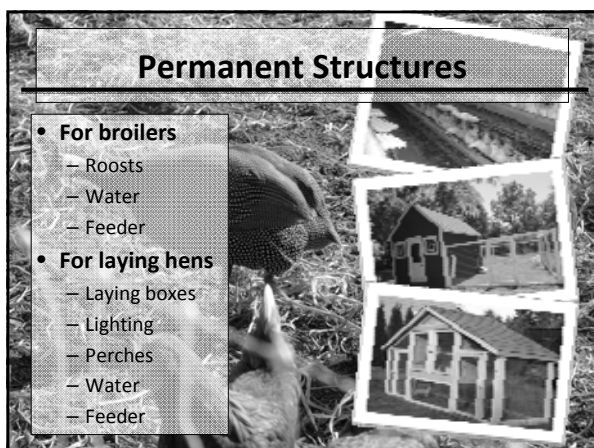
Structures

- Poultry need a dry, well ventilated environment to roost and lay eggs.
- They can be subject to heat stress in Florida during the summer time.
- Your chicken coop needs:
 - Ease of access
 - Ventilation
 - Protection against predators
 - Space – at least 1.5 – 2 ft² of space / animal




Permanent Structures

- **For broilers**
 - Roosts
 - Water
 - Feeder
- **For laying hens**
 - Laying boxes
 - Lighting
 - Perches
 - Water
 - Feeder



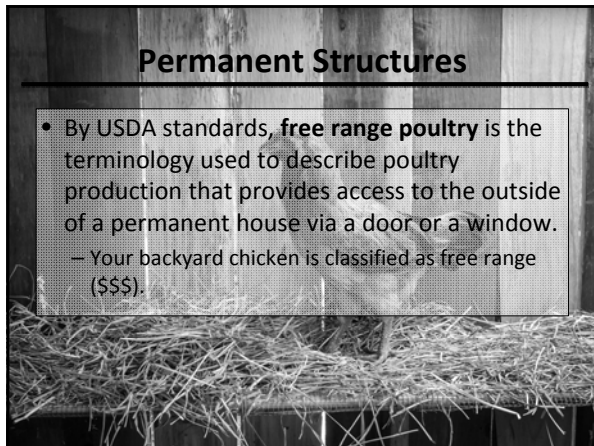
Permanent Structures

- Consider having a way to keep the animals dry.
 - Straw
 - Shavings
- Consider collecting and **composting the animal manure**. It makes great fertilizer.
- **Change bedding regularly** or add a layer of fresh bedding at least every 4 months.
 - Remove bedding at least twice/year and compost it.

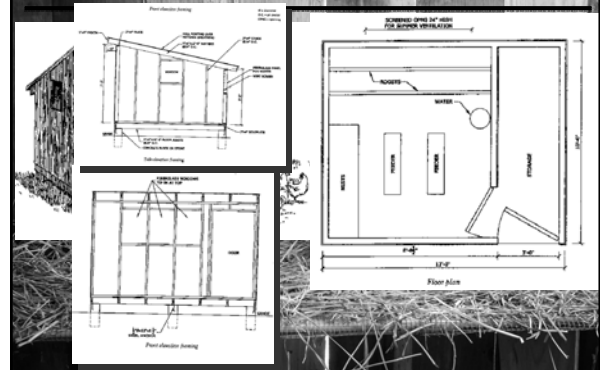


Permanent Structures

- By USDA standards, **free range poultry** is the terminology used to describe poultry production that provides access to the outside of a permanent house via a door or a window.
 - Your backyard chicken is classified as free range (\$\$\$).

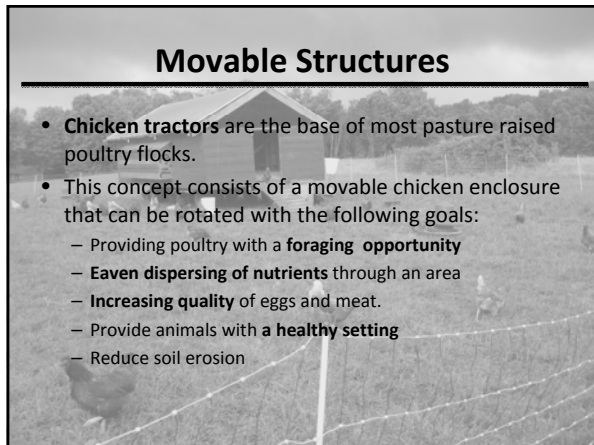


Permanent Structures

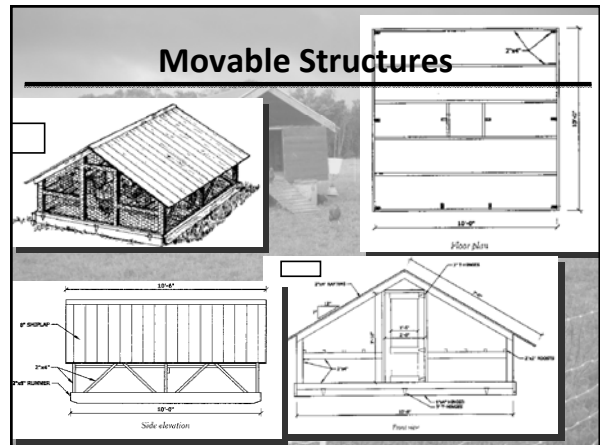


Movable Structures

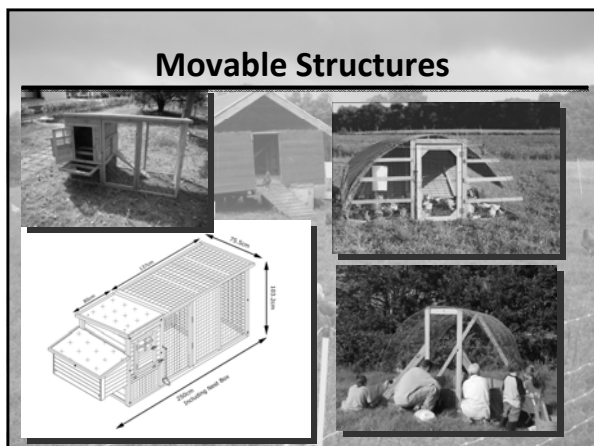
- Chicken tractors** are the base of most pasture raised poultry flocks.
- This concept consists of a movable chicken enclosure that can be rotated with the following goals:
 - Providing poultry with a **foraging opportunity**
 - Even dispersing of nutrients** through an area
 - Increasing quality** of eggs and meat.
 - Provide animals with a **healthy setting**
 - Reduce soil erosion



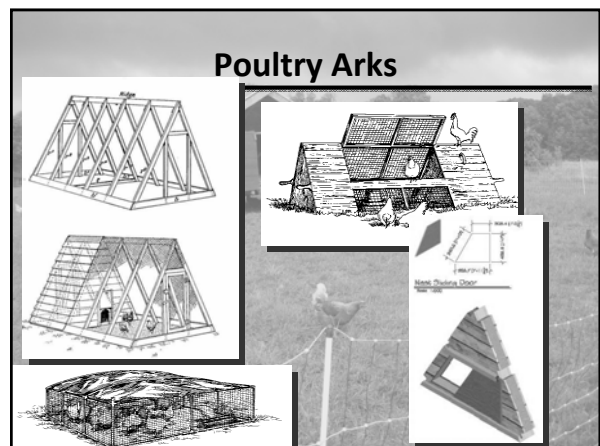
Movable Structures



Movable Structures



Poultry Arks




Foraging Behavior



- **Daily access to pasture** - forage on young vegetative plant material and live protein sources, such as insects, worms, and grubs
- **Some breeds may be better foragers than others**
- The birds need to roost in a secure coop at night
- Should have access to the outdoors at the **same time every morning** - to develop the habit of foraging during the early morning hours

Pasture-raised Layers



- Allow the birds free range during the day
- Enclosed structure at night
- **Hens should be released from the coop early in the morning.**
- The housing structure should be moved to fresh pasture during the morning hours to give the flock access to fresh pasture during peak foraging hours.
- **Feed and water should be provided outside as well as inside.**

Building Nest Boxes

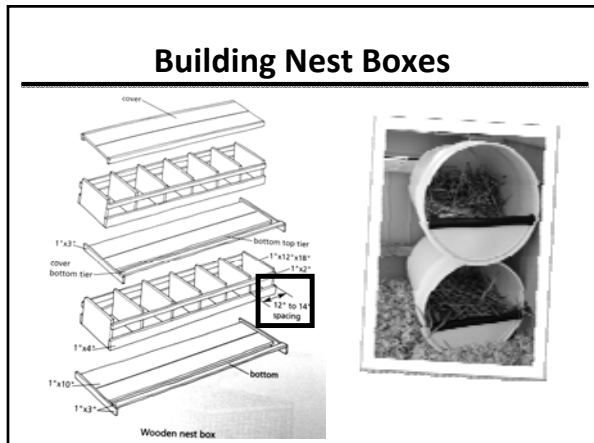
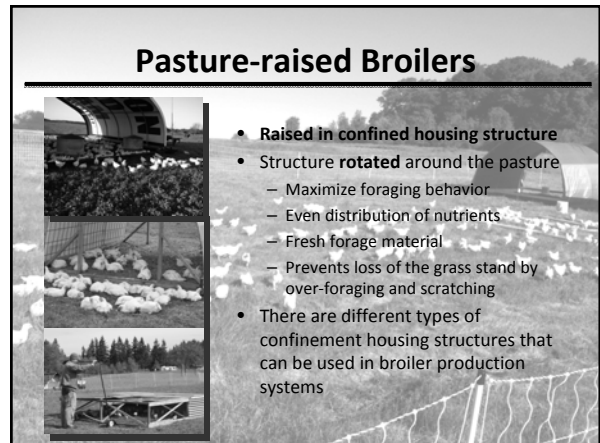


Diagram labels and dimensions:

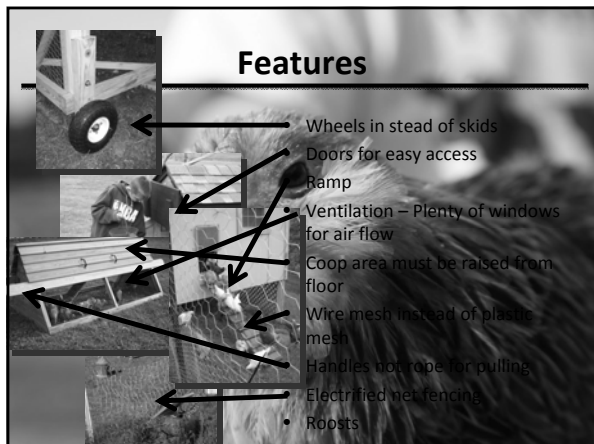
- cover
- 1"x3"
- bottom top tier
- 1"x12"x18"
- 1"x2"
- cover bottom tier
- 1"x4"
- 1"x10"
- 1"x3"
- bottom
- 12" to 14" spacing
- Wooden nest box

Pasture-raised Broilers



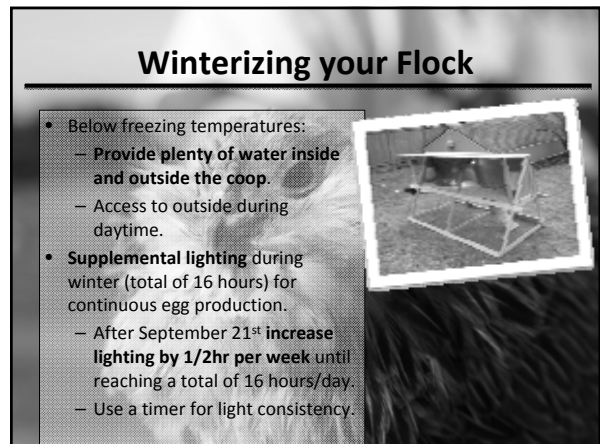
- **Raised in confined housing structure**
- Structure **rotated** around the pasture
 - Maximize foraging behavior
 - Even distribution of nutrients
 - Fresh forage material
 - Prevents loss of the grass stand by over-foraging and scratching
- There are different types of confinement housing structures that can be used in broiler production systems

Features



- Wheels in stead of skids
- Doors for easy access
- Ramp
- Ventilation – Plenty of windows for air flow
- Coop area must be raised from floor
- Wire mesh instead of plastic mesh
- Handles and rope for pulling
- Electrified net fencing
- Roosts

Winterizing your Flock



- Below freezing temperatures:
 - **Provide plenty of water inside and outside the coop.**
 - Access to outside during daytime.
- **Supplemental lighting** during winter (total of 16 hours) for continuous egg production.
 - After September 21st **increase lighting by 1/2hr per week** until reaching a total of 16 hours/day.
 - Use a timer for light consistency.

Recommended Resource

