

Six White Cornish and a Red Ranger, May 10, 2015.

These are White Cornish Cross and Red Ranger chickens at five weeks. They are now on pasture.

They are eating a diet of whole wheat, grass, worms, and whatever else chickens find in a pasture.

These birds are growing quite well.

Even so, pastured birds grow more slowly than birds grown in confinement.

These birds are healthy and enjoying a vigorous life.

There have had no orthopedic problems, no cases of "tip over."



Almost 100% of the original 150 birds have survived.

Now, the largest of the Whites are approaching three pounds.

The Reds are only half that heavy.

The Red in this photo may look nearly as large as the Whites but he is not.

He has much more plumage and a lighter body frame.

They will be harvested when between 6 and 8 pounds live weight.

Both the Whites and the Reds are "Straight Run."

That means they are a natural mix of cockerel (roosters) and pullets (hens).

The roosters grow faster and larger.

The White Cornish have been selected by breeders for easy machine plucking.

They have few feathers. Notice the bare spots and lower number of wing feathers which are deeply rooted.

When raised from birth with Red Rangers, the Whites are more active physically.

The entire flock adopts the good ranging and foraging style of the Reds.

In the photo, the birds are eating from a pile of wheat that I poured on the ground.

I do so to draw them greater distance from the brooder, so they will find fresh grass and worms.

The White cockerels will reach harvest weight in a few more weeks. The last to reach harvest size will be Red pullets.

Each night the chickens are locked securely in their brooder house for protection from the many nighttime predators.

In a few days, the entire flock will be moved to a portable coop enclosed in a moveable electric fence. The coop can be moved to keep the birds in a supply of fresh pasture.

The electric mesh fence protects them from day and night predators.

They are still subject to predation from the air.

Eagles and other raptors perch over the chicken yard at times every day.

The chickens quickly learned to seek shelter along a fence or under cover instantly when one of their number gives an alarm. They are less susceptible to predation from the air as they get larger.

Most years, the eagles get few, if any.

After this flock moves to the portable pasture coop, the brooder will be cleaned and readied for another batch of chicks that are due in a week. Tom