

White Cornish and Red Ranger Chicks, April 6, 2015



We started 150 day-old chicks on April 6.

They are of two types.

One hundred and twenty-five are White Cornish Cross, and twenty-five are Red Rangers.

The Whites are the variety of birds that is normally grown in confinement barns.

They are produced by hundreds of millions for meat.

Anytime you purchase chicken in the US you are almost certainly getting a confinement raised White Cornish.

They have been selectively bred for large breasts, lots of white meat, extreme appetite, and very rapid growth.

Normally they reach processing weight in five weeks.

When raised in confinement these birds get almost no exercise and are prone to leg and orthopedic problems.

The Red Rangers on the other hand have been selected to do well on pasture.

They are more adventurous, more athletic, and better grazers.

They seem to be much more intelligent overall.

Unfortunately, the Reds grow relatively slowly.

They are tasty but not as "meaty" as many people prefer.

In general, animals in confinement grow faster and require less feed than animals allowed a more natural life.

On pasture, birds of both varieties consume twice the feed per pound of chicken produced in confinement.

Exercise and an active social life require energy.

Of course, confined animals require medication to avoid the disease problems associated with high population density.

Perhaps most important, the quality of life in confinement is poor.

We mix White Cornish and Red Rangers in our pastured flocks to improve the pasturing behavior of the White Cornish.

The Whites quickly learn to lead the more active and adventurous lifestyle of the Reds. Tom