

Home (<https://www.kyagr.com>) / KY Agriculture (<https://www.kyagr.com/ky-agnews/press-releases.html>) / Press Releases (<https://www.kyagr.com/ky-agnews/press-releases.html>) / 2024 (<https://www.kyagr.com/ky-agnews/press-releases.html/2024>) / Kentucky's poultry industry celebrated in September



Poultry farmers and industry representatives joined Commissioner of Agriculture Jonathan Shell, second from right, at the Fall Market event at Hayden Farms in Daviess County Sept. 22 to sign a proclamation declaring September Poultry Month in Kentucky.

## 23 SEPT Kentucky's poultry industry celebrated in September

*Commissioner Shell celebrates one of Kentucky's top commodities this month*

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (Sept. 23, 2024)** – Kentucky poultry producers and industry representatives joined Commissioner Jonathan Shell as he proclaimed September Poultry Month in Kentucky, celebrating one of Kentucky's top commodities.

“Kentucky poultry producers are an economic engine for Kentucky,” Commissioner Shell said. “With more than 850 poultry farms and roughly 3,200 poultry houses in 50 counties, not to mention the thousands of backyard flocks found throughout the Commonwealth, it’s no doubt how the poultry industry is a top commodity for Kentucky. We want to take this month to celebrate what our poultry producers contribute to our agricultural landscape.

Poultry, which includes chickens (broilers), turkeys, and eggs, is consistently at the top of Kentucky’s commodities list. In 2022, Kentucky’s agricultural cash receipts reached a record high of \$8.3 billion. That same year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Census of Agriculture, which is a complete count of U.S. farms and ranches and the people who operate them, estimated poultry and eggs made up \$1.79 billion of that total, which was a 36 percent increase from the previous survey.

“As poultry production continues to grow, it not only supports the expansion of other vital commodities like Kentucky corn and soybeans, but also provides a unique opportunity to bring the next generation back to the farm,” said Jamie Guffey, Kentucky Poultry Federation executive director. “Poultry farming plays a crucial role in lowering the average age of farmers in the state, and we are proud to see more females leading poultry farms than in any other agricultural sector.”

By itself, Kentucky’s broiler production ranks No. 7 nationwide. In Kentucky, the industry employs around 6,300 people across the state and generates an additional 20,444 jobs in both the supply and ancillary industries.

Egg producers contribute approximately \$214.7 million to Kentucky’s economy while creating 1,769 total jobs for Kentuckians. Annually, 1.4 billion eggs are produced in Kentucky, helping to satisfy Americans’ appetites for the protein packed food. The most recent USDA World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates report found the average American consumed 279 eggs in 2022 with projections for 2023 even higher, up to 285 eggs per person.

Kentucky’s turkey industry also plays an integral role in Kentucky’s economy. The latest figures show the turkey industry was responsible for raising roughly \$2 million birds and created as many as 2,567 jobs in our state.

In addition to creating an economic engine for Kentucky, the state’s poultry industry is the largest local buyer of Kentucky-grown corn and soybeans. Kentucky’s poultry consumes 20- 25 percent of Kentucky-grown corn, meaning one in every four rows of corn planted in Kentucky goes to feed poultry in Kentucky.

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