

Thanksgiving Is

By VIVIAN L. WILLIAMS
Freeman Staff

With Thanksgiving in sight, many homemakers are planning festive dinners which are usually topped with turkey. We asked Mrs. Donald Burton, Eagle Rt. 1, to be our favorite cook this month, because she has had much experience in cooking turkeys and also knows about raising them.

"In our home, when we have guests, they just naturally expect turkey so I cook it all the time," said Mrs. Burton as she showed two — one a 10 pounder, stuffed and tenderly brown, the other, a larger bird, which was pre-smoked.

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my turkey hot dish, which they like."

The Burtons own and operate Elderwood Farm on Hy. N, where they raise turkeys to be sold commercially. They start the season with 5,000 day old poults which are generally shipped to them, air freight. All are white. They are immediately placed in battery brooders. 50 in a section, where they remain for about two weeks. They are then allowed to run loose in a closed area for about six to eight weeks, but are kept well off the ground because they can't stand dampness.

The young poults are de-beaked during the first days to keep them from fighting and also are de-snooded to make their "moods" better. They are fed on a concentrate with corn added. As

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they grow, the proportion of corn is increased. Turkeys are ready for market in about 22 to 24 weeks although some toms are kept about 26 weeks.

Donald Burton was born and raised on Elderwood Farm. He taught science and math at Racine and retired from teaching after 25 years of service. About 14 years ago, he returned with his family, to the farm where he had started raising turkeys in a small way, during the depression.

They have two sons, Tom and John and three grandchildren, all of whom take a keen interest in the farm. It is comprised of 250 acres with some additional rental acres. Besides the turkeys, there are about 100 head of Guernsey cattle. A two-year-old heifer, shown by son

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John, at World Expo 1972, Madison, won a blue ribbon in the national Guernsey show and has been nominated for All American. The interest in farming is growing in the younger generation too. The children were given calves and they have done well in 4-H judging. The entire family takes part in the various fairs held in the area.

About 2,000 turkeys will be dressed for the Thanksgiving market. Just before that time, big trucks will arrive and be placed at the doorway of the big turkey barn. By a sort of relay, each turkey to go, will be picked up bodily, checked for possible defects and a few culled out. The rest will be passed from hand to hand and placed carefully into the sectioned crates, because skin bruising is bad

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About 2,000 white turkeys like these will go to market soon for Thanksgiving dinners. Hens range from eight to 15 pounds, but toms may be somewhat larger. They are marketed just before

they are half a year old, so when properly cooked are tender and juicy.

Only Weeks Away

business. After reaching the dressing plant, they are dressed, government inspected and graded. The Burton turkeys are expected to rate Grade A.

Hens range from eight to 15 pounds while some toms may go over 20 pounds. A few are cut up for those purchasers who want halves or special parts of the big birds. Some go to a special place for smoking. Necks and giblets are not smoked which reduces the overall weight and because of this additional work, the pound price is somewhat higher.

Mrs. Burton is partial to a rather old, very heavy aluminum roasting pan. She starts her stuffed turkey at 400 degrees and when it starts to sizzle, reduces the heat to 350 degrees where she leaves it until the bird is tender and done. She may have it covered but not airtight. The cooking time for the 10 pound bird shown was only about four hours. Some home economists advocate a slower cooking temperature.

For a smoked bird, she uses a somewhat lower temperature, than for the regular turkey. She may have it at 300 degrees after it starts to cook, and may put a little water in the bottom of the pan. This type of roast smoked turkey is especially good for the hors d'oeuvre table or for sandwiches.

Their turkeys are prepared without metal devices for easy lifting, thermometers or butter added.



Freeman
photos
by
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Mrs. Donald Burton, Eagle Rt. 1, carves a smoked turkey. Because such a bird is pre-sterilized, she roasted it at a lower tempera-

ture than she does the fresh variety. Neck and giblets are not smoked which reduces the overall weight. The price per pound is higher.