

The Magazine for Emu Farmers

Emu Today & Tomorrow

Volume 31 • Issue 2
Spring 2021

**The Public's
Knowledge
of Emus—
Today vs. 30
Years Ago**



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- As a general rule, emu meat should not be overcooked since it is lean and loses its moisture quickly.
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- Emu meat responds well to sweet and spicy marinades and glazes made with soy sauce, garlic, barbecue, honey, fruits, and cooking wines.

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Established 1991

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Emu Today & Tomorrow (ISSN 10626034) is published quarterly for \$25 per year by *Emu Today & Tomorrow*, 11950 W. Highland Ave., Blackwell, OK 74631-6511. Email: info@emutoday.com.

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *EMU TODAY & TOMORROW*, 11950 West Highland Ave., Blackwell, OK 74631

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The Colorful Emus at the Gardner Farm

By Allison Elliot

White and blonde emus are Carl and Gayle Gardner's specialty. After investing \$1,500 per chick for three pairs of chicks, they started down a 25-year path of raising emus. One could say they had caught the "emu-itis" their friends talked about.

"A lot of people our age got into it," Carl explained. "A friend asked me to come look at his couple of emus, and we were taken by the birds. The second time, my wife and I looked at each other and thought they would be interesting to raise."

Unfortunately, two of the birds died from a filarial worm infection—a parasite emus can get from eating the soil—but that did not deter the Gardners. After a friend boarded their first chicks for a couple of years, they purchased some property and started a flock. It was opportune timing, as their hen had just laid 40 eggs that resulted in 19 chicks.

"We swapped birds with other people to diversify the genetics in our flock and raised more chicks the next year on our own. We realized we needed to get into a co-op because we needed somewhere to go with our products," Carl said.

After joining Emu Producers International Cooperative (EPIC), they joined with a group of local producers for home processing of emus, and the next year the Gardners welcomed over 200 chicks. Another producer acquired a meatpacking plant nearby and processed 100 emus for the meat. The Gardners then took the fat to be processed into emu oil and ended the year having over 500 gallons of oil stockpiled in 5-gallon pails. Their operation had begun.

"After that year, we only raised 25 to 50 birds for slaughter because we home processed. We could do six to

eight birds on a Saturday by ourselves and process all of them in about month and a half," Carl said.

The Gardners also sold emu meat to "raw feeders," who used it as dog food.

When the nearby processing plant closed, the owner gave the Gardners a blonde hen and blonde male. The next breeding season the Gardners got an unexpected result: the two emus bred and produced a white chick with a pink beak.

"From that point forward for the next 3 to 4 years, we played with genetics to get diversity. We had over 10 bloodlines on our farm to get crossed back into them to

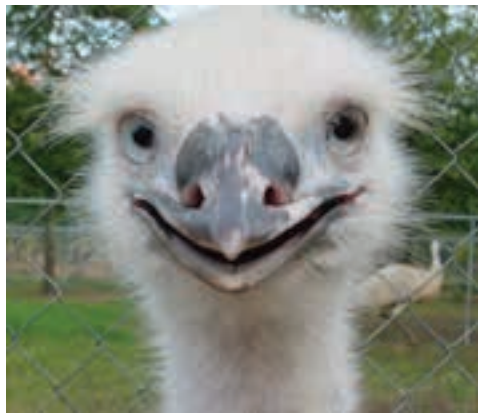
keep from doing just "line breeding." After several breeding seasons, we determined what would give us white, blonde, and normal birds and what the ratios were," Carl said.

As he explains, the ratio is a basic Mendelian genetics straight cross. (Mendel was a monk who founded genetics.) A blonde bird (Bb) has a white coloring gene (b) and a typical brownish coloring gene (B). Two blondes crossed together (Bb + Bb) makes a bird with two typical brownish genes (BB), a bird with two white genes (bb), and two birds with a typical brownish and a white gene (Bb, Bb).

Although it may seem simple to breed white emu with white emu, Carl says otherwise. "The hens choose their male. If a hen doesn't like a male, she won't mate," Carl said.

The coloration of emus is fascinating. Blonde emus have white feathers with black tips, typical emus have brown feathers with black tips, and white emus have all white feathers.

The Gardners' claim to fame could be facilitating the



A closeup view of white emu at Carl and Gayle Gardner's emu farm.



Left: A mixture of all three colors – white, blond, and regular – at the Gardners' farm.
 Top right: This was one of the first white emus that Carl and Gayle Gardner hatched, Donna.
 Bottom right: Trio of blond emu teenagers at the Gardners' farm.

introduction of white emus to South Africa. "Six or seven years later [after acquiring the blonde hen and male], we were at a national convention. A man from South Africa was trying to establish his own oil-processing production there, and he wanted a couple of white emus," Carl said. "We went through health inspections to ship to South Africa, and they safely went through quarantine."

Because Carl has never heard of any other white emus outside the United States, he believes the white emus at Kruger National Park in South Africa are descendants of his birds.

Except for the 60 to 70 breeders and breeder replacements they keep, the Gardners' live bird sales are exclusively chicks. Typically, they get about 20-30 eggs per hen, so about 600 to 700 eggs a year. Most years they will process a few birds for meat for themselves and sell the fat to another producer, since oil sales are no longer their primary farm income.

"I track all the production: every egg laid is recorded with which hen laid it and its weight," Carl Gardner said. "I know what my hens are producing, and over the years, I have observed that a hen usually peaks on the number of eggs produced by the second to

fourth year of production. After that, she tends to start producing fewer but larger eggs."

Today, the Gardners sell their regular birds to a customer because, as the two have grown older, the idea of processing is not as appealing as it used to be. For many years, they have also sold blown eggshells to people who want them for crafts and emu feathers for fishing lures.

To potential emu farmers, he advises deciding on what they intend to sell before getting started. Decide on whether it be live emus or their products, because he found securing purchasers was the hardest part. He recommends contacting the American Emu Association for help locating live animal processing plants and oil refiners.

Carl also advises emu farmers to always offer support after the sale of live animals.

Regarding the future, Carl says he and Gayle intend to keep raising birds for a few more years. He also wants to utilize his 25 years of experience to serve as a reference for people who have questions. "Every year I work with emus, I learn something new—I find a better or different way to do something," he said.

Emu Meat Excellent Source for Dog Food at Mt. Sicker Family Ranch

By Kathy Alward, Editor ET&T

There are many things to consider when starting an emu farm, but two motivations for Lois and John Hellemond at Mt. Sicker Family Farm included an endeavor to live a healthy country lifestyle and to be close to their children and their growing families. After the Hellemonds retired from their management jobs in Victoria, they moved to a beautiful farming community in the Cowichan Valley in the Canadian province of British Columbia (BC). As they were committed to living a healthy country lifestyle, they began to pay more attention to what they eat and how they take care of their bodies. While in the process of doing that, they became acquainted with Dr. Bill Code, who was one of the early members of the American Emu Association (AEA) and who sat on the committee that developed the criteria and standards for emu oil, according to Lois. After learning from him about the marvelous benefits of emu oil, they decided to investigate raising emus on their 10-acre farm.

“Our farm is one of the few—if not the only—North American emu farm that does everything, start to finish on site,” said Lois Hellemond. Although their farm has

been viewed by the licensing authority of BC, they are not required to license their plant because their meat is sold for high-quality raw dog food, according to Lois. The fat is processed in their plant into emu oil, and they are certified by the Canadian Food Inspection

Agency (CFIA) to be able to export their oil to the United States.

When asked what made them decide to sell their meat as dog food, Lois replied, “That is a good question.” Their problem was that they had no butcher skills to properly cut up all the different cuts of meat. They were fortunate to make the acquaintance of a young enterprising woman who was selling raw meat for dog and cats, according to Lois. “When we process the birds, we leave the fat that is located on the

neck for her. This makes the emu meat with emu fat the healthiest meat that she sells. This gives her business the benefit of a premium price. Emu meat assists older dogs and cats that have joint aches, muscle aches, digestive problems, skin conditions etc.,” said Lois. It is also good for expensive show dogs to keep them in top form and healthy, Lois remarked, as she added that this one customer buys all the emu meat they can supply.



Lois and John Hellemond, owners of Mt. Sicker Family Farm



Left: Emu Meat Dog Food that Mount Sicker Family Farm provides for Buddies Natural Pet Food.

Below: Emu at Mt. Sicker Family Farm



They have a growing business as more and more people are seeing the benefits of raw meat for their pets, according to Lois.

When the Hellemonds were asked if they had any advice for anyone who may want to sell their emu meat as dog food, they replied, “If we were starting our business in our 30s or 40s, we would definitely include in our operation the processing of our meat into raw food for dogs and cats. It is a growing business as many older people enjoy the company of their so-called fur kids.”

The Hellemonds offered advice to new people getting into the business to “Travel-travel-travel. Ask to visit farmers that have been in the emu business for a long time. Bring gifts or take them out for dinner so that they don’t think they are wasting their time.”

At peak times of the year, they have approximately 400 emus on their farm, and they also raise a few hundred chickens per year for meat and maintain a small flock of sheep to mow the perimeter lanes around the emu pens, said Lois. They sell live birds and hatching eggs,

too. They have returning customers from all over Canada—from British Columbia to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

The Hellemonds plan to continue emu farming in the future. “Now that the heavy sledding is done regarding infrastructure, etc., we have more time to enjoy our emus and work on perfecting our practices. For example, we are researching the beneficial effects of CO2 levels at times during the incubation and hatching process as is used successfully in large poultry operations,” Lois Hellemond said. As they age, however, according to Lois, their plan is to get regular farm help with the heavy stuff, such as moving livestock and fence repair.

The Hellemonds and their Mt. Sicker Family Farm have a website: <https://www.bcemufarm.ca> and a Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Lois-Hellemond-at-Mt-Sicker-Family-Farm-623295947750804>.

PROFITABLE MARKETING INSIGHT

How to Achieve Expert Status

By Elizabeth K. Fischer

Reprinted from the November/December 2014 issue of *Emu Today & Tomorrow*

I heard a local news story about strawberries promoted recently and said out loud, "I hope that story includes Govins' Meats and Berries."

It did.

The reporter began in front of a field of healthy, green strawberry plants, announcing that the strawberries were ready. Then he switched to John Govin describing this year's crop. "For a berry grower all the rain is great," John said. "The rain we've had came hard, and then the sun came out. That has made for great berries."

Although the story followed John's interview with one from another berry grower, the reporter ended the story back at Govins. The reporter popped a Govins strawberry in his mouth and said, "Mmmm, delicious!"

Govins didn't get this attention by accident. John has spent years contacting the media, taking animals to the stations for appearances, and offering information for reporters' stories. One day he demonstrated a jam recipe live on TV. His ending comment to that segment has stuck with me. "If a guy like me can do this, anybody can do it."

John has been helping reporters with story fodder for years. Whether for spring lambing, summer strawberry season, or the fall corn maze, John provides content reporters can readily use. He is easily accessible and gives interviews that enhance the report. He is willing to go the extra mile with demonstrations, station appearances, and video at his farm.

Through John's flexibility, consistent attention to publicity, and availability, Govins have attained expert status with the local media. That position assures Govins of being the first place reporters contact when they are doing a story, want a comment, or have a question involving any of the products or services Govins offer. Having local reporters recognize you as an expert is one very important reason to send press releases and/or regularly contact your local media.

Achieving expert status does not happen after one press release or contact. As John has demonstrated, expert status is attained through consistent, persistent contact. I have found businesspeople who get discouraged when a press release does not generate a story. I always advise them to keep sending the releases. They establish your business in reporters' minds as a resource and an expert.

When did you send your last press release? Send them regularly to achieve expert status.

Elizabeth K. Fischer is president of Profitable Sales and Marketing, Inc. and has authored three books: *What's in It for Me? Marketing from the Customer's Point of View*; *Mistakes I made My First Five Years in Business (and How You Can Avoid Them)*; and *Mistakes I made Buying Advertising*. She helps businesses get their marketing on track with E-sessions, which are a combination of lessons sent via e-mail followed by one-to-one conferences with her. Find out more about Elizabeth at psmc.com.



Emu Meat on the Go: Mobile Processing Units

By Allison Elliot

Mary Irvine is passionate about American-grown emu meat; however, some barriers complicate its production and sale. Educating consumers about the many benefits of emu meat, generating enough emu meat to supply the market, and getting the meat into the hands of consumers are some of the ways she is addressing those barriers.

Emu meat is a great fit for the consumer diet because it is very low fat. A question that seems to be on many farmers' minds is, how do we process the meat cost efficiently and get it into the consumer market?

Mary and her husband David started raising emus at their farm—aptly named “Emuzing Hill Farm”—4 years ago, starting with two birds. They have increased their mob to 26 and are adding more this year. Mary has found that, for the most part, if you want to process meat for human consumption, it must be processed via USDA certified processing plants, but the lack of convenient access to those facilities is a barrier to production.

Instead of loading up the birds for a long haul to a butchering site, which for her is about 5 hours away, Mary says that using a mobile processing unit could be less stressful for the farmer and the birds.

“All birds can be skittish, and I would rather not have to load the birds (which can be challenging) and make them travel for hours,” Mary said. “Mobile processors could be the best solution for farmers to maintain control over their mobs throughout the process.”

A couple of hurdles with mobile processing units are getting the unit certified and then getting a USDA inspector to visit the farm and approve the animals to be sold for consumption. Cost is another factor. For instance, \$65,000 would pay for the simplest unit for butchering and processing an emu, but it would not have everything a USDA inspector stipulates, according to Mary, and everything must be stainless steel.

If enough farmers needed access to USDA processing in a certain area, they could pool their money (perhaps create a co-op?) and have a mobile processing unit built that could travel a three- to four-state radius. The group would then manage the butchering schedule accordingly,” Mary said. “It could also be possible to make the processing unit available to other animal meat farmers when not being used by emu farmers as an additional income stream to maintain and expand the investment.”

Mary has researched custom-made mobile processing units and got estimates ranging from \$65,000 to

\$225,000. A December American Emu Association (AEA) Zoom chat discussing those units included information about a mobile slaughter facility that could be purchased for \$210,000 in the state of Washington (<http://mobileslaughter.com>).

“You can hire a USDA-certified inspector to come to the farm and inspect the animal to make sure it is alive and standing upright. They make sure the animal is healthy [and processed in accordance with USDA guidelines]. If it is, they apply their stamp of approval for USDA-approved meat, allowing the sale of meat across state lines,” Mary said.

Another option, according to Mary, is to obtain a certification that falls under the USDA category certification. “In New York, it is referred to as Article 5A. This is a better option in some cases because it doesn’t require that a USDA inspector witness the butchering process. The mobile unit would still need to be Article 5A-certified under exotics, and the meat would have to remain within the state. Not all states offer this option, so farmers would need to research this in their own state,” said Mary.

Mary has a vision to create a mobile network with a number of processing units across the United States—concentrated in areas where farms are located—to process the meat for emu farmers so they can get it to the American consumer.

“This may be doable provided that there is enough participation in financing and managing the mobile units, thereby creating an infrastructure that could support the emu meat market across the country in the long term,” said Mary.

Mary would also love to see a classification process established—similar to meat products such as beef—that provides visible assurance to consumers that the meat and the fat are coming from USDA-certified American birds.

“We need to be able to certify the origin of emu products so consumers are aware of what is being

Mary has questions for American emu farmers concerning their interest in these mobile processing units.

1. Would you be interested in having a mobile processing unit come to your farm?
2. What state is your farm located in?
3. How many birds do you process in a year?
4. Would you expand your farm operations if you had cost-effective access to the consumer market?
5. Are you interested in basic butchering or using a USDA service?
6. Does your state have a category for exotics?

Emu farmers who are interested in mobile processing may contact Mary at 315-247-8415.

produced here versus other countries, where lesser farming processes and production controls may yield a lower quality product,” said Mary.

In addition to setting up a mobile processing co-op and advocating for American-made emu products, Mary sells feathered emu nests, eggshells, and painted gold eggs on Etsy. She currently sells her meat to a dog food manufacturer but wants to increase her meat distribution to other markets.

“My goal is to continue learning about this industry and how best to get this wonderful meat into consumers’ hands,” said Mary. “I’m sure that if we work together as an industry, we can overcome the challenges that face us.”

Emu Runner— An Educational Film Promoting Unity and Understanding

Emu Today and Tomorrow magazine is honored to promote awareness that World Wide Motion Pictures Corporation (WWMPC) (formerly OTCBB: WWMO) tentatively plans a Summer 2021 theatrical release of the award-winning feature film *Emu Runner* <http://emurunnerfilm.com/>. WWMPC acquired the global distribution rights to this heartwarming Australian film, which is directed by Imogen Thomas, best known for the short film *Mixed Bag*, an award-winning New York University Graduating short film. A-list Australian actor Wayne Blair and newcomer Rhae-Kye Waites star in the film, which educates people about the emu industry and the significance of the emu. The American Emu Association (AEA) supports the release of this film to American audiences. Dennis Anderson, President of AEA, stated, “We’re excited to be supporting the marketing effort for a film that depicts the emu in such a positive light and appreciate World Wide Motion Pictures’ efforts to bring more awareness of this amazing animal to American audiences.”

Emu Runner is a story that is seen through the eyes of a determined, enthusiastic 8-year-old Aboriginal girl named Gem, who deals with the grief of losing her mother by bonding with a wild emu while living with her family in an isolated community in Australia. Gem will do anything to keep the bond with the emu, but she has difficulty with the area’s new social worker when she begins to steal food to feed the emu. According to Candy Buck, the media contact for WWMPC, “*Emu Runner* is one of the rare films that highlights the difficulties of the Australian Aboriginal People’s experience, exploring complex racial issues and the process of personal loss and grief. The filmmakers gratefully acknowledge the help and support of the Brewarrina community in allowing a realistic portrayal of their long-term existential struggle deep in the Australian Outback.”

Emu Runner has earned accolades and numerous festival nominations around the world, including winning “Best Australian Independent Film” at the

Gold Coast Film Festival in Australia and nominations from the Toronto International Film Festival in Canada and the Zlin Children’s Film Festival in the Czech Republic. The film also was a nominee for “Best Independent Film” by the admired Australian Academy of Cinema Television Arts at the 2019 awards ceremony. *Emu Runner* is also being showcased at festivals in Brazil, Spain, Poland, France, and the United Kingdom.

The creators of *Emu Runner*, in partnership with the Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM), created a study guide for the film to be used for numerous course curricula, including Geography, Civics and Citizenship, and Modern History. WWMPC also plans to work with leading educational professionals in the United States, focusing on course enrichment material for Social Studies and the Humanities.

“We are very proud to be releasing another meaningful family film from Australia, especially one that also has timely significance in spotlighting the challenges of coexisting in a multiracial world,” stated WWMPC President/CEO Paul D. Hancock. “In addition to a highly evocative story, the film offers numerous educational opportunities to teach diversity and inclusion that we are eager to explore throughout the U.S. and all of our targeted territories,” Hancock added.

“As we prepare for the national release of this heartwarming family film, we’re very grateful to organizations and groups such as the prestigious AEA for their kind support in spreading the word about the upcoming release of the film,” Hancock said. As stated in the *Emu Runner* AEA press release, the story “is one of the only internationally distributed family films produced in recent times to highlight the difficulties of the Australian Indigenous experience. *Emu Runner* offers viewers a glimpse into the life of a community underrepresented around the world, at a time when unity and understanding are needed more than ever.”

You can view a trailer to the movie *Emu Runner* at <https://youtu.be/ijJgf9LiSO7s>.

The Public's Knowledge of Emus —Today vs. 30 Years Ago

By Kathy Alward, Editor ET&T

As *Emu Today & Tomorrow* magazine celebrates its 30-year anniversary, one question comes to mind, and that is, "What is the difference in the public's knowledge of emus today versus 30 years ago?" Several American Emu Association (AEA) members shared their insights to answer this question.

Lois and John Hellemond from Mt. Sicker Family Farm noted that they believe that the public is more aware of emus today than 20 or 30 years ago. "Most know that an emu is a bird and not a four-legged furry animal. As more people are moving out of large cities, they are looking for livestock to raise on small holdings, and emu fits the bill."

Janean Parker and Tony Citrhyn from 3 Feathers Emu Ranch were happy to give their impressions, having been in the business for nearly 12 years now. They noted that they could not comment on the 30-year window and that they did not have anything scientific—only their perceptions.

"What we can say is that we think more people are aware of emus and the benefits of emu oil than when we first started," they observed. "We do think that many people we encounter at markets still have not heard of emu oil and are eager to learn about it and

are especially pleased when they try it. Even if they have heard of emus (and many have not, still thinking they are like an alpaca), they are not familiar with the benefits of emu oil. But there is a growing minority. (Yay!) We do get a lot of folks—maybe 30 percent, we are guessing—who have either heard of emu oil, used it in the past, or have a friend or acquaintance that has tried it. We also have had more folks indicate they have heard of emus, or maybe even had a neighbor that had a few emus or had tried the meat before. So, I think that awareness is growing, not only of emu oil but of emus generally."

Carl Gardner of The Gardner Emu Farm reflected on how the public's knowledge of emus has changed in those 30 years. "In Texas, anyone 40 years or older is familiar with emus and the fact that people raise them. They aren't as aware of the meat as of the oil," Gardner said. "We did a good job of getting information out about oil and products with emu oil in them."

Previous AEA President and Regions 4/5/6 Director Terry Turner remembers a turning point in the public's knowledge of emus. In the early 2000s, Jack McClung made infomercials with cure-all claims for Super Blue Stuff, a pain ointment made from emu oil, aloe





vera, and methyl sulfonyl methane (MSM). Those infomercials, as Turner remembers, would run about a half hour and would tell you multiple times what the product will do, reinforcing repeatedly the benefits of this product. Those infomercials changed the course of the public's knowledge of emu oil, according to Turner. Turner remembers she was working at farmer's markets at that point, and people would walk up to the farmer's market and say that they saw an infomercial, and she realized that the infomercial was a turning point for the public's knowledge of emus. Up to that point, Turner would have a visual that would interest customers, such as an emu egg, and customers would ask, "What is that? An avocado?" Sometimes Turner would use a live emu chick as a visual, but after the infomercials, people knew what an emu was.



One big improvement made over the past 30 years, according to Turner, was AEA certification of emu oil. Emu oil got a "pedigree," Turner noted, because AEA-certified oil must meet specific criteria, and the AEA certification validates the quality of the oil. The AEA certified oil program gives customers the reassurance

that the emu oil processing has an industry standard. Turner also remembers that she wore a t-shirt that marketed the oil—a great marketing tool that came out of an AEA convention. The t-shirt said, "Emu Oil: Life

Just Got Better," and Turner said she always sold more product at the farmer's market when she wore it.

Turner also mentioned that the emu meat market changed with the identification of alpha-gal syndrome (AGS). AGS is a condition that most often begins with a bite from a lone star tick. The tick transmits a sugar molecule called alpha-gal into the victim's body, causing a red-meat

allergy to develop. Although emu meat is considered poultry, it became popular as a substitute for red meat.

Joylene Reavis of Sugar Maple Emu and the AEA Secretary and Director at Large pointed out that LiMu Emu has become a star on the Liberty Mutual Insurance TV ads making emu a household word.

These emu farmers all agree that the public's knowledge of emus has increased over the last 30 years. Marketing tactics have changed over the last three decades with new cost-effective opportunities available to farmers such as social media.



EMU FARMING: A BEGINNER'S GUIDE

Choosing the Right Feed for Your Emus

Ruth Ann Replogle, Staff Writer

Reprinted from the Winter 2017 issue of *Emu Today & Tomorrow*

One of the key components to emu farming is proper nutrition. Choosing the right emu feed and keeping it in balance optimizes growth, fat production, and egg production.

"It's very important to keep your feed in balance," said Cyril Klein of C'mon Back Acres in Iowa. Klein spoke about emu nutrition during a previous American Emu Association (AEA) annual convention.

Assess what feed you need

The first step in choosing the right feed for your emu is assess why you are raising emus. Are they:

- Breeders
- Being raised to process for meat
- Being raised to process for oil
- Going to be sold as an adult
- Going to be sold as a chick
- Pets

What an emu eats affects its body composition. For example, what you feed a bird being raised for its fat (emu oil) should differ from what you feed a bird being raised for its meat.

Choose what, when, and how to feed

Once you've determined what your reasons are for raising emus, the second step is choose what, when, and how to feed based on that.

Some emu farmers choose to feed their breeder birds differently than their chicks. Others will feed all their emus the same feed. Some emu farmers will feed their birds the same feed year-round, while others will

switch to certain feeds at different stages.

"A good quality feed will work for all ages—chicks through breeders—which is very important for the beginning emu farmer," Klein said. He added the economics of buying a chick starter feed, grower feed, and finisher feed does not work with a small flock.

"I personally feed the breeder feed year-round. In the winter, I switch to a higher energy feed formulation to keep the birds from losing fat in January and February and then I go back to the breeder feed. I switch to finisher feed the last three months before slaughter," Klein said.

Find the balance for emu feed

The final step in choosing the right feed is creating the right nutrition. A balanced diet is essential to having healthy birds.

You need to determine an emu's feed-to-gain ratio. In other words, the ratio of pounds of feed consumed to the emu's pounds of body weight gain in a specific period of time. The lower the ratio, the more efficient the bird is in converting feed nutrients to body tissue.

Emus require feed that is high in carbohydrates as well as a certain amount of protein. The protein present in feed is broken down in the intestines into amino acids, which are absorbed into the bloodstream and used for muscle growth. An emu requires more than 20 amino acids, 11 of which cannot be naturally manufactured by the bird and, therefore, must exist in their feed, according to a 1997 study by the University of Iowa.

Shortest in supply in emu diets are methionine, lysine, threonine, isoleucine, and tryptophan. Emus also require vitamins in small amounts for normal growth and development. Minerals, such as

calcium, phosphorous, manganese, sodium, chloride, potassium, iron, copper, iodine, zinc, and selenium are essential and small or even trace amounts must be present in the diet.

Emu experts recommend starting with a premixed feed, which contains the basic micronutrients of what is needed to feed your emu, and blending it with local commodities to build your own feed recipe. That way your feed is customized to your birds and their needs in your area.

“Consult with a nutritionist with good credentials and expertise with emus,” Klein said. You can find a nutritionist at your local feed mill, co-op, county extension office, or university.

The AEA offers an emu feed formula that Marcia Huddleston, of North Country Emu Ranch in Minnesota, developed that works for any emu farmer—no matter where in the U.S. they are—and Klein sells a premix that he has spent many years developing.

“Through the years, I have used test pens (over 300 birds) to improve my formulation and have consulted with various nutritionists locally and nationally during this process,” Klein said. Additionally, he offers support to his customers by developing a recipe using their local commodities. He will modify the recipe for special needs depending upon where they live and the size of their flock.

“Mixing your own feed comes with various challenges,” Klein cautioned. “Do you have all the equipment? Do you have access to all the commodities?”

He recommends purchasing a quality premix and having a feed mill process your recipe into a pelleted feed. Pelletting the feed prevents sifting and settling out



of the nutrients and the birds receive a balanced diet with every mouthful.

Huddleston also advised not buying ratite feed. It is made for ostrich and rhea, not emu, she said, adding the intestinal tract of the ostrich and the emu are markedly different. Huddleston said emu feed should contain less than 5 percent fiber. Ratite feed can contain up to three times the recommended fiber for emus. Emu cannot use fiber so they will not do well on ratite feed.

Jay Winslow, of Amaroo Hills Emu Farm in North Carolina, said he’s bought and used everyone else’s feed through the years—“I’ve tried it all.” He also has done several feed studies on chicks. In the end, he settled on one feed that he feeds year round, a formula he compiled by talking to emu farmers locally and working with the poultry department in his area.

Spotting nutritional deficiency

“Practical experience is the best teacher,” Klein said in spotting nutritional deficiency in emus.

A nutritionist not only can help you figure out what nutrients your birds need, but also will let you know if there is a deficiency in your area so you can make adjustments to the feed.

“Emus are a very hearty animal,” Klein said, “and when fed a quality feed, they do very well.”

He recommended networking with experienced emu farmers and joining the AEA to help you learn more about the business of emu farming.

“There is an abundance of advice and expertise available,” Klein said. “Talk to all of them and use what works for you.”

National Emu Week (N.E.W.)

By Joylene Reavis

It's time to start thinking about how YOU can participate! We are not that far away from May!

What Can You Do?

National Emu Week (N.E.W.) is an annual event held over a nine-day period from the first Saturday in May through the second Sunday in May. N.E.W. is a time to educate the public about the emu industry. This year, N.E.W. will be observed from Saturday, May 1 through Sunday, May 9. It will be here before we know it!

National Emu Week started in 1999 as "Emu Awareness Week" (EAW). Then, in 2001 at the St. Joseph, Missouri, AEA Convention's State Presidents meeting, the name was changed to National Emu Week with the acronym N.E.W.

Even though N.E.W. will be held after Easter, it will still be a perfect time to showcase your emu egg art. A local egg art contest with entries in the painted, carved, and/or decorated categories is one possibility. You need to start thinking about advertising your emu egg contest early so contestants will have enough time to create their works of art. A new supply of emu eggs should also be readily available at this time of year. Examples of egg art can be seen at www.AEAEggArtContest.com. By hosting an egg decorating contest, you can bring attention to the emu industry while giving you an opportunity to advertise that you have emu eggshells ready to be decorated for sale along with other emu related items.

Setting up displays in a store front window or a showcase at your local library, bank, school, or area business would draw interest to the emu industry. Other ideas are an open house; farm tours; library or mall displays; restaurant specials; community dinners; newspaper advertisements; press releases and articles; talks given to schools, organizations, nursing homes, or other groups; product specials; samplings; booths in area promotional events; area farm tours; community celebrations, etc. These are all excellent ways to

NATIONAL EMU WEEK



educate people and make them aware of the many benefits the emu industry has to offer.

Each state should appoint a member to apply for an Emu Week proclamation from your state governor. If a state proclamation is not possible, a city, county, township, or any other area leader can proclaim May 1-9 as "Emu Week" in your area.

Call your state president to find out more information on what your state association has planned for N.E.W. and ask if a N.E.W. proclamation has been applied for. Find out how you can become involved in your state N.E.W. activities along with local participation by your farm, ranch, or business.

Each and every AEA member needs to become involved in promoting their industry. Remember, if YOU don't promote your industry ... WHO will?

In the past some members have held an Open House at their farm. Many have chosen to give farm tours by appointment, weather permitting, during National Emu Week. You do not need to host a major event to participate in N.E.W. Even an inexpensive classified ad will help to bring attention to N.E.W. A "SPECIAL" on the pricing of one of your products could be promoted at this time.

It is time to start thinking about getting your supplies for National Emu Week. Have brochures made, order extra products, and make arrangements for advertising your event.

Let's make this event a GREAT promotion of the entire emu industry!

•••

A form similar to this article with blanks to fill in dates is available on Joylene Reavis' CD, "Promoting Your Emu Business for National Emu Week and Beyond," which can be ordered from page 22 of this issue of ET&T.



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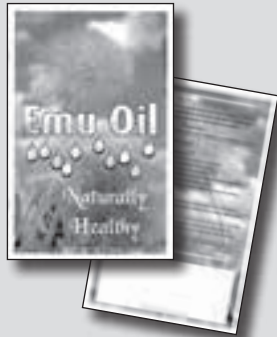
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By Joylene Reavis

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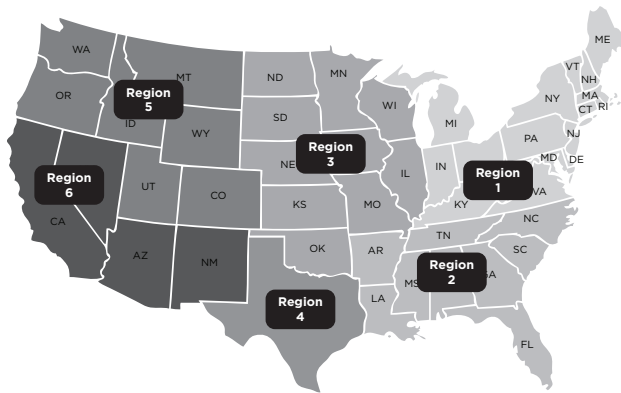
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AMERICAN EMU ASSOCIATION - APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP



The American Emu Association has state and regional affiliates to support members on a local level. Your AEA and affiliate membership year is effective on the date of receipt of your application and runs until the end of that month the following year. Membership dues can be paid online or sent to: **American Emu Association, 510 W. Madison Street, Ottawa, IL 61350.** The AEA reserves the right to approve or refuse membership in the Association. Questions? Write to us at info@aea-emu.org.

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The American Emu Association is a national, member-driven community dedicated to developing structural support and visionary leadership for the emu industry through actions that develop public awareness of emu products and develop means to advance the growing emu industry. Accordingly, the Association expects each member to abide by the following **AEA Code of Conduct:**

1. To be familiar with the purpose and objectives of the Association and to promote its aim actively.
2. To present conduct that at all times reflects dignity and respect for the Association and other members.
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