

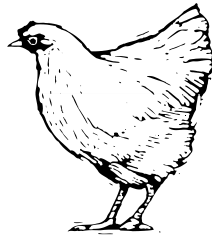
# PRICE TAG/COST TAG

What costs aren't included in the price of your food?

## Chicken

### Price Tag

Chicken costs anywhere from \$1.14 to \$8.39 per pound. Whole chickens and frozen meat cost less; boneless, skinless breasts top the price charts. What costs are associated with these prices?



### Cost Tag

#### Food Miles

Most chicken meat (broiler) production occurs in the southeastern United States. Georgia is the top broiler producing state in the US, followed by Arkansas and Alabama.<sup>1,2</sup> After processing, these birds are shipped long distances to Wisconsin, but locally raised chicken may be available in your area on farms or at farmers' markets.

### Genetic Diversity

Most broilers are commercially produced Cornish crosses,<sup>3</sup> which are profitable because they grow quickly. However, one study found that a slow-growing strain of chickens produced more tender meat, with breast meat higher in protein and lower in fat, than a fast-growing strain (and both strains had higher protein levels in meat when given outdoor access compared to their confined counterparts).<sup>4</sup> A few multinational corporations control most commercial broiler genetics.<sup>5</sup>

### Social and Health Costs

Small farms throughout the US once provided chickens for local markets. Now fewer than 50 corporations produce virtually all chickens consumed<sup>6</sup> and four corporations control nearly 59% of the broiler industry.<sup>7</sup> Today's broiler industry is dominated by companies working with contract growers who are increasingly concerned about the poor quality of chicks and feed supplied by the companies and requirements to invest in expensive facility upgrades.<sup>8</sup> To keep pace with increased demand, processing workers handle up to 140 birds per minute.<sup>9</sup> When you buy chicken from a local farmer, you are supporting a different production and processing model.

### Environmental Impact

Centralized production and processing means large concentrations of manure and other waste, which increases potential for water pollution and odor problems. Poultry manure may contain contaminants, including ammonia, pathogens, antibiotics and pesticides.<sup>10</sup> Look for antibiotic-free and pasture-raised chicken where you buy poultry.

The price you pay for your food may or may not include all of the costs associated with it, such as costs to the environment and to the health of those who produce and consume it. Learn all you can about the food you buy—your choices matter!

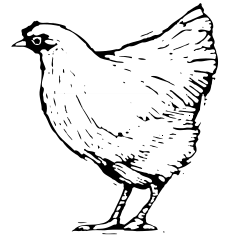
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<sup>2</sup>USDA ERS. (n.d.) *Poultry and Eggs: Background*. Washington, DC: USDA ERS. Retrieved May 12, 2010 ([www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/Poultry/Background.htm](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/Poultry/Background.htm)).

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<sup>3</sup>Fanatico, A. and S. Polson. (2005). *Poultry genetics for pastured production*. Fayetteville, AR: ATTRA. Retrieved May 10, 2010 ([attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/poultry\\_genetics.html](http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/poultry_genetics.html)).

<sup>4</sup>Fanatico, A.C., P.B. Pillai, J.L. Emmert and C.M. Owens. (2007). "Meat Quality of Slow- and Fast-Growing Chicken Genotypes Fed Low-Nutrient or Standard Diets and Raised Indoors or with Outdoor Access." *Poultry Science* 86:2245-2255. Retrieved 1/4/11 ([ps.fass.org/cgi/reprint/86/10/2245](http://ps.fass.org/cgi/reprint/86/10/2245)).

<sup>5</sup>Sheldon, B.L. (2000). "Research and Development in 2000: directions and priorities for the world's poultry science community." *Poultry Science*, 79:149. Retrieved August 31, 2010 ([ps.fass.org/cgi/reprint/79/2/147](http://ps.fass.org/cgi/reprint/79/2/147)).

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<sup>7</sup>Hendrickson, M. and W. Heffernan. (2007). *Concentration of Agricultural Markets*. Columbia, MO: Department of Rural Sociology, University of Missouri.

<sup>8</sup>Farmers' Legal Action Group, Inc. (2001). *Assessing the Impact of Integrator Practices on Contract Poultry Growers*. September, p 1-3. St. Paul, MN: Farmers' Legal Action Group. Retrieved September 2, 2010 ([www.flaginc.org/topics/pubs/poultry/poultrypt1.pdf](http://www.flaginc.org/topics/pubs/poultry/poultrypt1.pdf)).

<sup>9</sup>Chen, Y-R. (2006). "Inspecting poultry for safety and quality at high speed." *SPIE Newsroom*, August 7, 2006. doi: 10.1117/2.1200607.0338. Retrieved May 10, 2010 ([spie.org/x8641.xml?highlight=x2406&ArticleID=x8641](http://spie.org/x8641.xml?highlight=x2406&ArticleID=x8641)).

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<sup>10</sup>Sims, J.T. (1997). "Agricultural and Environmental Issues in the Management of Poultry Wastes: Recent Innovations and Long-Term Challenges." In *Agricultural Uses of By-Products and Wastes*, J.E. Rechcigl and H.C. MacKinnon, eds, Ch. 6. Washington, DC: American Chemical Society.

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