

## Geese Production

Commercial goose production relies almost exclusively on the Embden breed. This breed combines the advantages of white plumage, large body size, and reasonable level of egg production. Geese are very hardy, and are the closest grazers known.

Farm geese are usually marketed in the fall and winter at 21 to 26 weeks of age, at a weight of 13 to 15 pounds. These geese are fed a starter feed on a free-choice basis for the first 3 - 4 weeks, and then turned out on pasture for 15 to 18 weeks. During this period, the geese are fed only about 1/4 pound of grain mix per day. At 18 weeks the geese are confined for a 3 week finishing period.

In a second program, goslings are fed a full feeding of goose starter feed until they are 4 weeks old. At 4 weeks, the birds are allowed to graze good pasture plus about 1/3 pound of balanced feed per day until 11 weeks of age. When birds are 11 weeks old, they are full-fed a finishing ration to 15 weeks. Under this feeding program, geese are marketed at 15 weeks averaging about 12.5 pounds body weight.

### Suggested Feeding Program

The nutrient requirements of geese are very similar to chickens at a similar age. Unlike chickens, however, geese usually derive much of their nutrition from pasture during the growing period. Like ducks, geese have a higher requirement for niacin than chickens.

Geese are typically fed the same rations that are sold for ducks. For the first four weeks, goslings are fed a 22% protein, medium energy, starter diet on a free-choice basis. This same feed is continued on a limit fed basis (1/4 to 1/3 lb.) along with access to pasture until the birds are 6 weeks old. This ration is best fed as a 3/32 or 1/8 inch pellet or crumble. If a goose starter is not available, a non-medicated chick starter may prove satisfactory. Goslings are generally not given medication.

Goose Starter (22% C.P.)		Goose Grower (16% C.P.)	
1075	Corn	1465	Corn
660	Soybean Meal, 44%	330	Soybean Meal, 44%
150	Wheat Middlings	100	Wheat Middlings
60	Meat & Bone Meal	60	Meat & Bone Meal
50	Meat Bird Premix	40	Meat Bird Premix
6	Salt	6	Salt
2001		2001	

Geese may be switched to the grower ration at 6 weeks of age. This is used as a supplement to the pasture (1/4 to 1/3 lb.) until the birds are to be "finished" at either 11 or 18 weeks of age. The goose grower diet is then fed on a free-choice basis for the last 3 - 4 weeks before market.

### Approximate Feed Consumption (Amt./Bird)

Age at Marketing	Starter Consumption (0 - 6 wks.)	Grower Consumption (6 wks. - mkt.)	Total Feed Consumption	Market Weight
15 wks.	13.5#	27.5#	41.0#	12.5#
21 wks.	13.5#	38.5#	52.0#	13.0#
26 wks.	13.5#	47.5#	61.0#	15.0#



**Management Suggestions**

Geese should have plenty of room to grow. The brooder house should provide 2 square feet of floor space per gosling starter to 4 weeks of age.

Allow geese at least 1 inch of feeder space during the first two weeks and 1 1/2 inch from then to market.

Make sure there is adequate supply of clean, fresh water. Keep water in fountains or troughs low to prevent excess splashing.

If pasture is to be used, allow goslings on grass as early as 2 weeks of age in mild weather. If goslings have a good supply of young grass, gradually reduce feed during the morning hours until they get no morning feed.

An acre of pasture will support 25 - 50 birds depending upon the size of the geese and quality of pasture. The more hungry geese are when they are turned out in the morning, the farther they will range for grass. If pasture can be rotated each week, it has a better chance to recover.

Goslings need protection from cold rains and wind until they have a reasonable covering of feathers on their back, usually 6 - 7 weeks of age.

Goslings for the 21 - 26 week grow out period may be started anytime during the goose hatching season, March through June. Early goslings have the advantage of a longer grazing season, but later goslings have the advantage of cool weather for fattening.

