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Midget White Turkeys Provide Eggs And Meat

"Midget White turkeys are excellent small farm birds. They're not as big as most other heritage turkey breeds. Their temperament is great, kind of dog-like," says Jeannette Beranger, research and technical programs manager for American Livestock Breeds Conservancy (ALBC). "Their personality and egg production stand out from other turkey breeds."

The breed dates back to the early 1960's when the late Dr. J. Robert Smyth at the University of Massachusetts worked on developing a smaller turkey breed. It didn't take off at the time, but in the 1990's one of Smyth's students, Dr. Bernie Wentworth, continued the work, and the breed has become more popular among growers who don't want to raise larger breeds.

Midget White turkeys have white bodies, red to bluish white necks, and pinkish white legs and toes. Toms average 13 lbs., and hens average 8 lbs. by 28 weeks of age. Besides producing meat, the breed lays more eggs than other breeds, averaging 60 to 80 eggs a year. Research at the French Culinary Institute in New York City revealed that the eggs are perfect for rich pastry crèmes, desserts such as Crème Brulée and Deviled eggs.

Midget White turkeys are available through many hatcheries. Breeding stock averages \$75/bird. Expect to pay \$7 to \$10 for day-old poults. As with all Heritage turkey breeds, they require a higher protein diet (28 percent or more) to start. Keep the brooder clean, Beranger recommends, and make sure it's evenly heated so there aren't overly hot or cold spots. Introduce the birds slowly to the outdoors so they can acclimate to their new surroundings and to bio-organisms present in the soil.

"If chickens are on the property, Heritage turkey poults are susceptible to blackhead, a deadly protozoan disease for turkeys. But if you introduce them slowly, they can build up



"Ultra fork" clamps onto loader bucket and comes with 7 replaceable, 32-in. long spears. Top part of frame has 4 stake pockets to hold 2 by 4's that form a "backstop" when hauling brush.

Clamp-On "Ultra Forks" For Loader Buckets

"Our patent pending 'ultra fork' clamps onto most tractor or skid loader buckets and can be fitted with up to 13 replaceable quick-attach spears. Works great for picking up hay bales, pallets, manure, debris, shrubs, silage, trash and more," says Ted McSherry, Wheat Ridge, Colo.

The 58-in. wide unit comes with 7 replaceable, heavy-duty 32-in. long spears that extend through holes in the frame and are secured with lynch pins. The spears have a lift capacity of 1,500 lbs. The top part of the frame has 4 stake pockets designed to hold 2 by 4's that form a "backstop" when hauling brush.

The fork assembly slips over the edge of the bucket and is held fast by 2 screw-on clamps. No welding or drilling is required.

"It's nice to have one product that can do so many things," says McSherry. "I came up with the idea because I operate a small farm with goats, cows, horses and chickens and needed something to pick up bales, haul manure and straw, and to load pallets. I use two forks for pallets, three forks for bales, and all seven for brush."

Sells for \$659 with 7 spears or \$799 with 13 spears, plus S&H.

The company also offers a new post puller that clamps onto a bucket. It lets you quickly pull up wood posts or trees up to 6 in. in dia.

The unit consists of 2 hinged steel blades with 6 offset grabbing edges and works entirely by gravity. There are actually 3 overlapping blades on each side, which accounts for the 6 grabbing edges.

"It lets you pull out posts or trees without a resistance to it over time," Beranger adds.

Fans of the breed include hobby farmers who appreciate that they eat bugs in their flower gardens, orchards and vineyards.

ALBC offers a free turkey husbandry manual as well as a manual about how to choose breeding stock, for growers interested in raising their own birds. Download the



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ever leaving the tractor seat and without needing hydraulics or chains," says McSherry. "You just approach the post until the blades contact it, and then as you raise the bucket the blades automatically catch on the post and pull it up out of the ground. The edges of the blades aren't sharp enough to slice, but they are sharp enough to grab the post or tree."

Sells for \$649 plus S&H.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ted McSherry, Bucket Solutions, 3440 Youngfield St. # 403, Wheat Ridge, Colo. 80033 (ph 866 992-2333; ted@bucketsolutions.com; www.bucketsolutions.com).

Reader Inquiry No. 25

manuals by visiting <http://albc-usa.org/EducationalResources/turkeys.html>.

"This breed is a lot of fun and perfect for small farm production," Beranger says.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, American Livestock Breeds Conservancy, P.O. Box 477, Pittsboro, N.C. 27312 (ph 919-542-5704; albc@albc-usa.org).