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Organic Farmers Disagree on How to Protect From Bird Flu

The sign outside Rick Klaphake's turkey farm reads: "Absolutely no trespassing - disease control."

The 12,000 turkey hens gobbling away in one of his 500-foot-long barns were living out the final days of their 18-week lives. But not because of bird flu. Most of them will grace holiday dining tables starting with Thanksgiving later this month.

Poultry growers like Klaphake, as well as government and industry officials, say they're confident the U.S. poultry industry is safe from dangerous strains of bird flu, such as H5N1, that have ravaged poultry in Asia and spread to parts of Europe. The biggest reason: the animals are kept in, and people and wild birds are kept out. "We've taken steps to protect ourselves by confining the birds," Klaphake said.

Klaphake's operation is typical for turkey farms in Minnesota, the country's top turkey-producing state. And across the country, top chicken producers follow similar strategies for keeping their flocks free of disease. On Klaphake's farm near Sauk Centre, turkeys have little human contact. Few visitors are allowed. Farm employees shower and change clothes before entering the barns, and wear disposable plastic booties to avoid tracking in germs. Automated systems feed and water the turkeys.

While the sides of the barn open to allow fresh air in, screens keep out migratory birds that could carry in bird flu. Exterminators make monthly visits to control rodents that might track the virus in.

The turkeys are moved into the barns when they're one day old and don't leave until they're trucked off to a nearby processing

plant. They're watched closely for signs of illness, and blood samples from every flock are tested at the plant, said Klaphake, the president of the Minnesota Turkey Growers Association.

It's all very different from the way poultry is raised in Asia, where chickens and ducks run loose and live close to people and other livestock, and are sold live in open-air markets where they can infect each other and possibly people.

Like the \$3 billion turkey industry, almost all U.S. chicken comes from big producers such as Tyson Foods Inc. and Perdue Farms Inc. that control everything from hatching chicks to marketing the finished products. Bird flu is nothing new to these producers.

The viruses come in two groups: high pathogenicity, which are the deadliest kinds, and low pathogenicity, which cause less serious illnesses. The virus causing the most concern for birds and people in Asia, H5N1, is a high-path strain. The U.S. Department of Agriculture says there's no evidence that it has spread to people or animals in the United States. The last known outbreaks of high-path bird flu strains in the United States were a small one in Texas last year and in a large one that struck Pennsylvania and Virginia in 1983.

But the milder forms turn up often. Producers have tests to spot them, and those tests will also detect the more dangerous forms, said Dale Lauer, director of the state's poultry testing lab in Willmar.

Bird flu typically spreads from bird to bird through contact with their droppings or respiratory secretions. What worries health

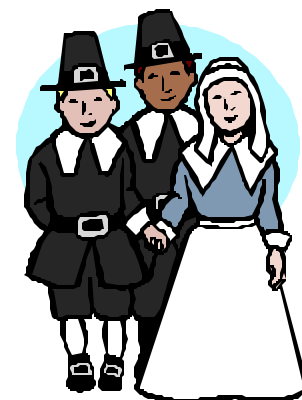
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November 22-23, 2005

Harvest Blend Regular

- Acorn Squash
- Baby Carrots
- Russet Potatoes
- Yellow Onions
- Jewell Sweet Potatoes
- Cucumber
- Romaine Lettuce
- Granny Smith Apples
- Bosc Pears
- Bananas
- Cranberries
- Sunburst Oranges

See the web site for details on our other options. Produce bag contents are subject to change based on availability.



Account Updates

We've gotten a lot of new customers lately, so this is a reminder that whenever possible, all changes to your account should be made through the Member Area of the web site.

Due to the amount of email we get, we cannot promise that requests sent to us in email will be seen in time for your next delivery.

If you have any questions about your account, we'd be glad to help. But please remember to use the web site whenever possible.

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officials is the prospect that a dangerous strain could mutate into a version that could easily spread from human to human and kill millions.

The data show that bird flu among turkeys dropped dramatically as producers switched to confinement from open-range operations, Lauer said.

Other defenses are in place. The United States does not allow poultry imports from Southeast Asia, and it's monitoring migratory birds that might come into contact with Asian birds as they pass through Alaska. And bioterrorism defenses set up after the Sept. 11 attacks will help stop any spread of dangerous strains of bird flu, said Julie Craven, a spokeswoman for Willmar-based Jennie-O Turkey Store Inc., the country's largest processor.

But critics of large-scale farming aren't sold on what the big producers are doing.

Dr. Michael Greger, director of public health and animal agriculture for the Humane Society of the United States, said the biosecurity measures are important, but he maintained that the big confinement operations actually add to the danger of a global pandemic.

"I think they're overconfident in their ability to keep these bugs out," Greger said. "You can do your best, but unfortunately these bugs still get inside."

Having many hosts packed into small spaces gives flu viruses more opportunities to mutate, he said. On top of that, he said, the stress of living "beak to beak" weakens birds' immune systems.

The solution, Greger said, is to change the way poultry is raised,

reducing stresses on the birds by giving them more space, cleaner conditions and protected access to the outdoors, plus better genetics, so they're better able to fight off infections. He said that would reduce the threat of bird flu viruses mutating into such virulent strains as H5N1.

Organic poultry producers are also concerned, but not enough to turn to big confinement operations, said George Siemon, CEO of the Organic Valley Family of Farms, a cooperative of 700 farms based in La Farge, Wis.

Organic Valley says its first line of defense is trying to raise healthier birds, and its growers closely monitor their flocks. If there were an outbreak nearby, its farmers would keep their chickens indoors, begin testing and take steps to reduce the risk of outside infection.

Siemon, whose own farm near La Crosse, Wis., includes about 3,600 egg-laying hens in two houses, said federal rules require that organic birds have access to the outdoors, and organic consumers expect it.

Research shows that organic animals of all sorts have stronger immune systems, Siemon said. He also said he hasn't had any problems with wild birds such as ducks flying down the Mississippi River flyway infecting his flocks.

"We've been having birds outside for 13 years," he said. "We haven't had any issues with any diseases from that."

Still, he said, organic producers will comply with any temporary or emergency standards the government might impose.

Recipes

Apple and Squash

- 1 acorn squash
- 1 cup chopped apples
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1/2 cup finely chopped onions
- 2 tbsp brown sugar
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1/2 tsp dried thyme leaves
- 1/4 tsp salt

Preheat oven to 375. Split the squash in half, lengthwise, and remove seeds and place in baking dish. Set aside. To make apple filling, melt butter in a large skillet over medium heat and sauté onions in butter for about 3 minutes. Add apples, brown sugar, balsamic vinegar, thyme and salt and continue to sauté for a few minutes.

Remove mixture from heat and set aside. Score squash before filling to absorb more of the flavor and spoon the filling into each half. To keep the squash moist while baking, add about 1/2 inch of water to the bottom of a baking dish and place squash in baking dish and cover with foil. Bake for about 1 hour, or until squash is tender. Serves 4-6.

Oven-Roasted Potatoes

- 2 lbs medium potatoes, scrubbed and washed
- 2 medium zucchini
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1 tbsp dried rosemary or 2 sprigs fresh
- 1/2 tsp sea salt
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- black pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 350. Cut potatoes and zucchini into 1-inch long chunks, ½-inch thick. Place zucchini in bowl and cover with plastic wrap; set aside. Mince garlic with rosemary and sea salt until mixture is almost a paste. Combine garlic paste with olive oil in a 14x9-inch baking dish. Add potatoes and coat well with mixture. Roast 30-35 minutes, turning potatoes once or twice with metal spatula during roasting. Add zucchini to baking dish and toss vegetables well. Return pan to oven and roast for another 20 minutes or so, until zucchini is barely tender and potatoes are golden brown. Sprinkle with pepper and serve immediately. Serves 4.

Green Beans with Olives

- 1 lb. fresh green beans
- 2 tbsp chopped onion
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 tbsp sundried tomatoes, chopped
- 1 tsp dried basil
- ½ cup black olives, sliced or whole.

Place beans into a pot of boiling salted water. Cook about 7 or 8 minutes. Drain and set aside. Heat the oil in a large fry pan. Add onions and garlic. Cook 2 minutes over low-medium heat. Add tomatoes and basil. Cook 3 more minutes. Add beans and cook a further 3-4 minutes. Stir in olives and serve. Serves 4.

Collard Rolls Stuffed with Mushroom Pilaf

- 2 cups rice
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1/2 lb shitake mushrooms sliced, discard stems
- 2 tbsp pine nuts, browned in skillet
- 2 tbsp tamari or soy sauce
- 2 tbsp Barley Miso
- 3 tbsp flour
- 1 bunch collard greens

Wash rice and put in sauce pan. Add water and salt. Cover and set heat to high. Set timer for 30 minutes. When boiling, reduce heat to med-low. When timer goes off most of the rice should have absorbed the water, if not cook for 5 more minutes. Turn off heat and let sit covered for 10 minutes.

Sauté onion and mushrooms in olive oil until onions are translucent 5-8 minutes. Add cooked rice, pine nuts, tamari and pepper to pan and stir. Place flour in 1/4c of water, stir until dissolved. Add miso to that and stir until smooth. Add remaining water. Place in a sauce pan and cook while stirring with a wire whip until thickened. Cover and set aside.

Put 4 cups of water in a shallow large pan with lid, heat until boiling. Wash collards, cut stems off where leaf connects. Arrange whole leaves in boiling water one at a time, until half the bunch is in the pan. Cover and cook for 5 minutes.

Remove with a spatula and place hot collards in a bowl of cold water.

Repeat with remaining half bunch until all leaves are cooked and in cold water.

Remove one leaf from bowl. Place collard leaf on a cutting board with the stem in 12 o'clock position, the top of the leaf facing your belly. Place 2-3 tbsp of filling in center of leaf. Fold sides over filling and roll the top over toward the stem. Place 1/4 cup of sauce in the bottom of a large casserole dish, coat bottom. Place rolls on sauce stem side down. Repeat until pan is full.

Pour remaining sauce over rolls and place a sheet of foil loosely on top. Place in 375 degree oven for 20-30 minutes.

Yams 'n Cranberries

- 3 medium yams, peeled and cubed
- 1 cup light soy milk
- 12 ounces fresh or frozen cranberries
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1/2 cup golden raisins
- 3 tbsp brown sugar
- 1 tsp ground nutmeg
- 1/4 cup honey

Preheat oven to 350° F. Place the first 3 ingredients in a 3 1/2 quart casserole. Heat soymilk, honey and cinnamon stick in the microwave for 1 minute or in a saucepan for 3 minutes. Pour over yam mixture. Sprinkle with brown sugar and nutmeg. Cover and bake 1 1/2 hours, stirring a few times during baking.

Dilled Green Beans

- 1 lb fresh green beans, trimmed
- 2 tbsp butter or margarine
- 1/2 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 1 tbsp prepared grated horseradish, drained, optional
- 3/4 cups low-fat or skim milk
- salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1/8 cup fresh dill, chopped

Cook beans in boiling salted water until tender, about six minutes. Meanwhile, in medium saucepan, melt butter over low heat. Stir in flour and horseradish if using, and stir constantly 1 minute. Gradually whisk in milk. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer 1 to 2 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Stir in dill and pour sauce over beans. Serve hot.

Wild Rice with Cranberries and Caramelized Onions

- 2 cups vegetable broth
- 1/2 cup brown rice, uncooked
- 1/2 cup wild rice, uncooked
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 3 medium onions, sliced into thin wedges
- 2 tsp sugar

- 1 cut dried cranberries
- 1/2 tsp orange zest, finely grated

Combine broth and brown and wild rice in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to low, cover and simmer until rice is tender and the liquid is absorbed, about 45 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat oil in medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add onions and the brown sugar. Cook until liquid is absorbed and onions are soft and translucent, about 6 minutes. Reduce heat to low. Slowly cook onions, stirring often, until they are a caramel color, about 25 minutes.

Stir in cranberries. Cover and cook over low heat until cranberries swell, about 10 minutes. Transfer rice to a large serving bowl. Gently fold cranberry mixture and orange zest into cooked rice.

Roasted Yam Casserole

- 1 onion
- 1 to 2 cloves garlic
- fresh oregano
- 2 tbsp tahini
- 1 tbsp soy sauce
- 1 cup water

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Wash & scrub and dice carrots, parsnips, yams, sweet potato. Chop the onion and mince garlic. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add onion & garlic, saute for 1 minute. Stir in yams, parsnips and carrots & continue cooking for 5 more minutes now add the oregano & saute for 2 minutes.

Combine tahini, soy sauce and water in a small bowl, blending until a liquid sauce is obtained. Transfer the vegetables to a lightly oiled 2 qt casserole dish and cover with the sauce. Cover and bake for 35-40 minutes.

Mulled Cranberry Cider

- 1 orange
- 8 cups cranberry-raspberry drink
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 6-inch stick cinnamon
- 3 star anise
- 1 tsp whole cloves
- orange peel strips

Remove the orange portion of the orange peel using a vegetable peeler. Cut peel into strips. Squeeze juice from orange, discard seeds and pulp. In a 3 1/2-, 4-, or 5-quart crockery cooker combine orange juice, cranberry-raspberry drink, and brown sugar.

For spice bag, place the orange peel, cinnamon, star anise, and whole cloves on a double-thick, 8-inch square of 100 percent cotton cheesecloth. Bring corners of cheesecloth together and tie with a clean cotton string. Add to cooker. Cover and cook on low-heat

setting for 5 to 6 hours or on high-heat setting for 2 1/2 to 3 hours. To serve, remove spice bag and discard. Ladle cider into cups. If desired, garnish with additional orange peel.

Autumn Pear Salad

- 1/3 cup rice vinegar
- 2 tsp cranberry juice concentrate
- 1 tsp dijon mustard
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 9 cups mixed greens
- 2 medium pears, cored and thinly sliced lengthwise
- 3 ounces blue or gorgonzola cheese -- crumbed
- 3 tbsp chopped walnuts
- 3 tbsp dried cranberries

Dressing: In small bowl, whisk together vinegar, juice concentrate and mustard. Slowly add oil, whisking until blended and thickened. Season with salt and pepper.

Divide greens among 6 individual serving plates. Top each with sliced pears, crumbled cheese, walnuts and cranberries. Drizzle each with some dressing and serve.

Pear Crisp

- 2 cups pears peeled, cored and sliced
- 1 tbsp organic sugar, maple syrup or sweetener of choice
- pinch of salt
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1 cup flour
- 1/2 cup brown sugar or desired sweetener
- 1/2 cup of walnuts [chopped] –optional

Mix pears, sugar & salt and set aside. Cut butter into flour until crumbly, add oats and sugar and mix well. Pour sweetened fruit into a 9" casserole, cover with topping mixture and bake for 20–25 minutes at 375° until top is golden brown and fruit is bubbly. Cool and serve with vanilla frozen yogurt, ice cream or soy milk.

Acorn Squash Veloute with Ginger and Mustard Seeds

- 3 tbsp plus 1 tsp vegetable oil
- 2 1/2 cups chopped onions
- 8 cups 1-inch pieces peeled acorn squash (about 3 1/4 pounds)
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh ginger
- 4 1/2 cups (or more) vegetable broth
- 2 tbsp tomato purée
- 1 Pinch cayenne pepper
- 1 tbsp cumin seeds
- 1 tbsp mustard seeds

Heat 3 tbsp oil in heavy large pot over medium-high heat. Add onions; sauté until light golden, about 8 minutes. Add squash and ginger; sauté 5 minutes.

Add 4 1/2 cups broth. Simmer until squash is very tender, about 35 minutes. Working in batches, purée soup in blender. Return to same pot. Add tomato purée and cayenne. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Simmer 10 minutes to blend flavors; add more broth if soup is too thick. (Can be prepared 1 day ahead. Cover and refrigerate. Rewarm soup over medium heat before serving.)

Heat 1 tsp oil in small skillet over medium heat. Add cumin and mustard seeds and stir until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Ladle soup into bowls. Top with seed mixture and serve.

Acorn Squash Tortellini

- 1 acorn squash
- 1/4 tsp ground nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp honey
- 1 recipe Fresh Pasta Dough

Preheat oven to 400° F. Slice squash in half lengthwise. Remove seeds and strings and place squash halves, cut side down, on a lightly oiled baking dish. Bake 45 minutes, until tender. Remove squash from oven and allow to cool. Scoop out flesh into a bowl and discard shell. With a fork, mash squash with nutmeg, cinnamon and honey.

With a pasta machine or rolling pin, roll out a sheet of pasta dough. Use a cookie cutter or juice glass cut dough into circles about 2 1/2 inches in diameter. Place 1/2 tsp of filling about 1/2 inch from the edge of each circle. Fold each circle in half and press edges together. Pick up circle with your index finger and thumb, holding folded edges out. Pull up corners together around your index finger. Press corners together to seal then flip up rim. Remove to a floured plate. Repeat with remaining dough and filling.

Boil pasta in a large pot of salted water for 2 minutes. Drain and add sauce of your choice.

Cranberry-Pecan Relish

- 8 ounces fresh cranberries
- 1 tsp orange zest
- 2 tbsp orange juice
- 2 tsp Dijon-style mustard
- 1 tsp chopped fresh thyme
- 1/2 cup pecan halves
- 1/4 cup finely chopped red onion
- Salt and pepper

Preheat oven to 375°. Place nuts in a shallow baking dish and toast in oven for about 6 minutes, until fragrant. While nuts are toasting, combine cranberries, orange zest, orange juice, mustard, and thyme in the bowl of a food processor. Add hot nuts and pulse until you have a semi-

finely chopped relish, not a paste. Empty into a bowl and stir in onion. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Use relish to fill celery ribs, endive spears, or finger sandwiches.

Grilled Spicy Tofu

- 1/2 cup chunky peanut butter
- 3 tbsp peanut oil
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 2 large onions, chopped
- 2 chili peppers, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 sprigs thyme, finely chopped
- 1 bay leaf, crumbled
- 2 large canned pimientos, cut into strips
- sea salt and black pepper, to taste
- 1 pound firm tofu, cut into 1/2" cubes

In a large flameproof dish, combine the peanut butter, peanut oil, half of the lemon juice, the onions, chili peppers, garlic, thyme, bay leaf, and the pimientos. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Place the tofu in this marinade and leave it for at least 30 minutes.

Preheat the broiler to high for 5 minutes. Place the dish of marinated tofu under the grill until it has browned on top. Turn and brown again, then twice more until the tofu is golden brown all over. Serve with rice.

Apple Calico Stuffing

- 2 cups apple cider OR apple juice
- 1/2 cup chopped celery
- 1 1/2 cups chopped red apples
- 2 cups dry bread cubes
- 2 cups crumbled corn bread
- 1/2 cup shredded carrot
- 1/2 cup sliced green onions
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/8 tsp pepper
- 1 tsp sage
- vegetable cooking spray

Place the cider and celery in a medium saucepan. Over medium heat, simmer mixture for 3 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in remaining ingredients, mixing until combined. Place in a 1 1/2 qt. baking dish coated with cooking spray; cover.

Bake at 350 degrees for about 45 minutes or until thoroughly heated. Makes 8 (1/2-cup) servings.