***Lesson: Pastured and Free Range Poultry***

**Purpose:** A niche market is “a demand for a very specialized product or commodity” (dictionary.com). Niche markets create their product or commodity in a very specialized way that sets them apart from their competitor, which gives them an edge for success. In poultry production, some producers have found a way to specialize their production practice in a way that gives their final product a desirable trait that is unique from their competitors. The niche poultry producers have found is in raising their poultry in pastures or free range.

**Directions:** Access the commodities and products tab on the AgMRC website (<http://www.agmrc.org>) and find the link to Livestock. Utilize information located here to answer the questions below:

1. According to the AgMRC website, “pastured poultry production generally has lower entry costs and thus is attractive to smaller or limited resource farmers.” Why do you think that this is so?
2. Why might consumers have some preference toward items that are regarded as “organic” or “free range” versus traditional production systems?
3. What defines “pastured poultry”? Do you think that this system could be practical for a high school student who wants to raise poultry at his or her home? Why or why not?
4. Why did free-range poultry fall “out of favor in the 1960s”? Do you think these reasons are relevant today? Why or why not?
5. Why is processing a major concern for producers of free-range or pastured poultry? What implications could this hold for your own “backyard” poultry enterprise if you decided to start one?

**Reinforcement activity: Picking a Poultry Production Process – Pros and Cons**

For this activity you will need to create a pros and cons list for pastured and free range poultry production. What makes it work well, and what disadvantages do these production methods have?

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| **Pastured and Free Range Poultry Production** |
| Pros | Cons |
| 1. | 1. |
| 2. | 2. |
| 3. | 3. |
| 4. | 4. |
| 5. | 5. |
| 6. | 6. |
| 7. | 7. |
| 8. | 8. |
| 9. | 9. |
| 10. | 10. |