

Poultry Meat and Eggs: A Pillar of Global Nutrition and Economic Growth

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Abstract

Poultry meat and eggs are among the most widely consumed animal-source foods, playing a vital role in global nutrition and food security. Their consumption has increased significantly due to population growth, urbanization, and rising incomes, especially in developing regions. Chicken dominates global meat markets due to its affordability, low fat content, and minimal religious or cultural restrictions. The demand for poultry products is projected to rise across all income levels, contributing not only to human nutrition but also to economic and agricultural development. This review explores the factors driving poultry consumption, its nutritional significance, and the broader economic and environmental benefits associated with poultry farming.

1. Introduction

Poultry meat and eggs are essential sources of high-quality protein, widely consumed across various cultures and dietary traditions. Their accessibility, affordability, and nutritional benefits make them a crucial part of diets worldwide. In recent decades, consumption has risen sharply, primarily driven by increasing global populations and improved economic conditions. This review examines the growing demand for poultry products, their health benefits, and the economic contributions of poultry farming.

2. Global Consumption Trends

2.1 Growth in Demand

The demand for poultry meat and eggs has surged due to several key factors:

- **Population Growth:** A larger global population necessitates increased food production.
- **Urbanization:** Urban dwellers tend to consume more poultry due to convenience and availability.
- **Rising Incomes:** Higher income levels in developing countries have enabled greater consumption of protein-rich foods, particularly poultry.
- **Cultural and Religious Acceptance:** Unlike beef or pork, poultry faces fewer

religious and cultural restrictions, making it a widely accepted protein source.

2.2 Regional Consumption Patterns

- **Developed Countries:** Poultry meat is consumed primarily from industrialized, large-scale farming operations.
- **Developing Countries:** Small-scale poultry farming remains a major source of nutrition, with many rural households relying on their own flocks for eggs and meat.
- **Emerging Markets:** Fast-growing economies are experiencing rapid increases in poultry demand due to dietary shifts toward protein-rich foods.

3. Nutritional and Health Benefits

Poultry meat and eggs offer substantial nutritional benefits, making them an essential part of a balanced diet.

3.1 Nutritional Composition

- **High-Quality Protein:** Essential for muscle growth, repair, and overall body function.
- **Low Fat Content:** Compared to red meats, poultry contains lower levels of saturated fats.

- **Healthy Fatty Acid Profile:** Poultry meat has a favorable balance of omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids.
- **Micronutrients:** Eggs are rich in essential vitamins (B12, D) and minerals (iron, zinc, selenium).

3.2 Role in Food Security

- Poultry products are a cost-effective protein source, helping to combat malnutrition.
- Their short production cycle allows for rapid growth, making them a reliable food source.

4. Economic and Agricultural Contributions

Beyond direct consumption, poultry farming provides significant economic and environmental benefits.

4.1 Employment and Livelihoods

- Poultry farming supports millions of jobs worldwide, from small-scale farmers to large agribusinesses.
- It provides income opportunities, particularly in rural communities.

4.2 By-Products and Environmental Impact

- **Manure:** Used as organic fertilizer, enhancing agricultural productivity.
- **Down and Feathers:** Processed for commercial use in textiles and bedding.
- **Eggshells:** Reused as a calcium supplement for livestock feed.

5. Future Outlook

The poultry sector is expected to continue growing due to increasing global demand. Key trends shaping the future of poultry production include:

- **Advancements in Poultry Farming:** Innovations in feed efficiency, disease prevention, and sustainable farming practices.
- **Sustainable Production:** Efforts to reduce environmental impact through improved waste management and resource-efficient farming methods.
- **Market Expansion:** Emerging economies will play a significant role in driving future poultry consumption.

6. Conclusion

Poultry meat and eggs play a crucial role in global nutrition, offering high-quality protein and essential nutrients. Their affordability and accessibility have contributed to rising consumption worldwide. Additionally, poultry farming supports economic growth through employment, trade, and agricultural by-products. With increasing demand, sustainable and efficient production methods will be essential to meet global food security needs.