

Unit E: Other Poultry

Lesson 2: Exploring the Duck Industry



I. There are many types of ducks throughout the world and in Afghanistan.

A. Both domesticated and wild ducks exist throughout the world.

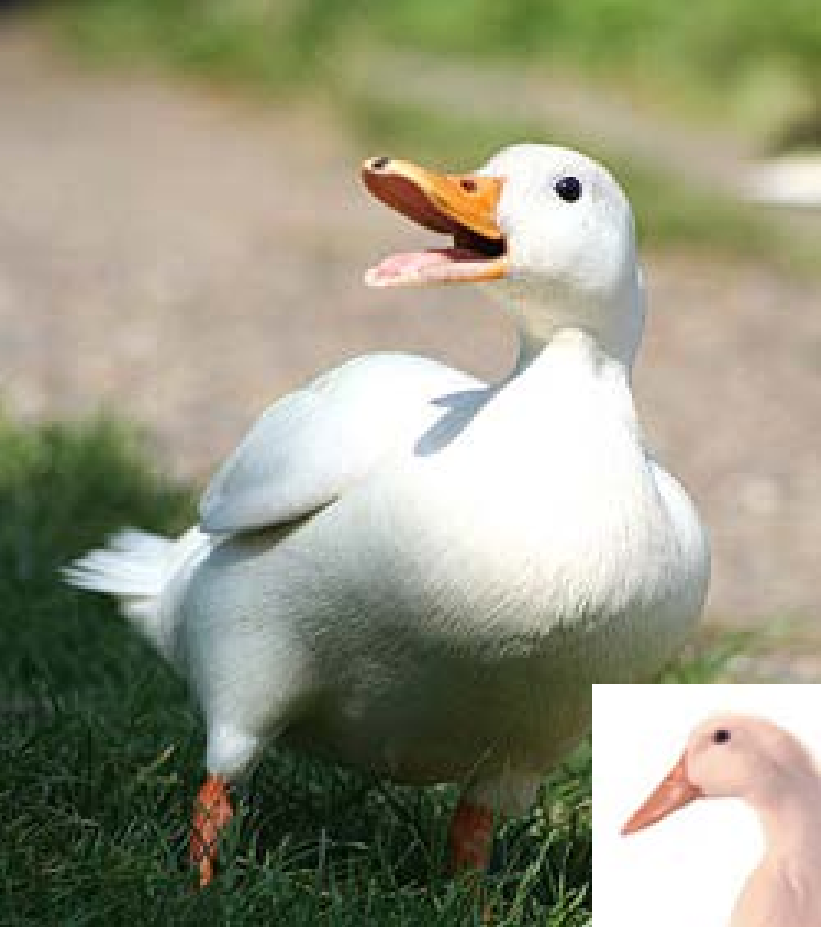
1. Ducks are a part of the *Anatidae* family.

2. They are smaller than geese and are usually aquatic.

B. The most common ducks in Afghanistan are as follows:

1. The Pekin duck (*Anas peking*)
 - a. The Pekin duck is bred from a wild mallard found in China.
 - i. Pekins are used for meat and egg production.
 - ii. This duck serves as an important food source in many Chinese dishes.
 - b. Mature adults weight between 3.6 and 5 kgs.
 - c. They are predominantly white with orange beaks and feet.

- d. They will live for about 9 to 12 years.
- e. Pekins produce about 200 eggs a year and will usually only lay one egg a day if they are not otherwise hatching.
 - i. Pekin ducks are generally less broody than other birds and will leave their nest more frequently.



2. Muscovy duck (*Cairina moschata*)
 - a. Despite their name, Muscovy ducks originated in Mexico and Central and South America
 - b. All Muscovy Ducks have long claws on their feet and a wide flat tail.
 - i. The drake (male) is about 86 cm long and weighs 4.6-6.8 kg, while the hen (female) is much smaller, at 64 cm in length and 2.7-3.6 kg in weight; domesticated males often weigh up to 8 kg (17 lb), and domesticated females up to 5 kg.

- c. The wild Muscovy Duck is blackish, with large white wing patches.
 - i. Domesticated birds may look similar; most are dark brown or black mixed with white, particularly on the head.
 - ii. Other colors such as lavender or all-white are also seen.
- d. Both sexes have a nude black-and-red or all-red face; the drake also has pronounced caruncles at the base of the bill and a low erectile crest of feathers.

- e. *C. moschata* ducklings are mostly yellow with buff-brown markings on the tail and wings.
 - i. Some domesticated ducklings have a dark head and blue eyes, others a light brown crown and dark markings on their nape.
- f. They are agile and speedy.





3. Other common duck breeds of Afghanistan include:

a. Laghmani duck

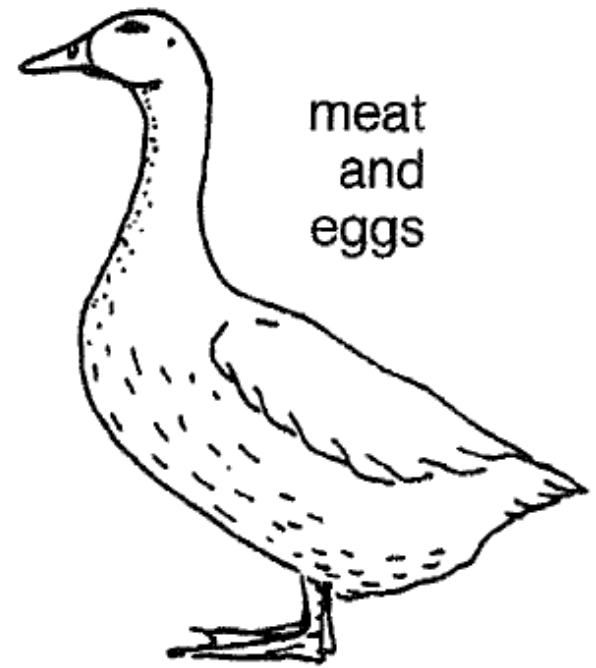
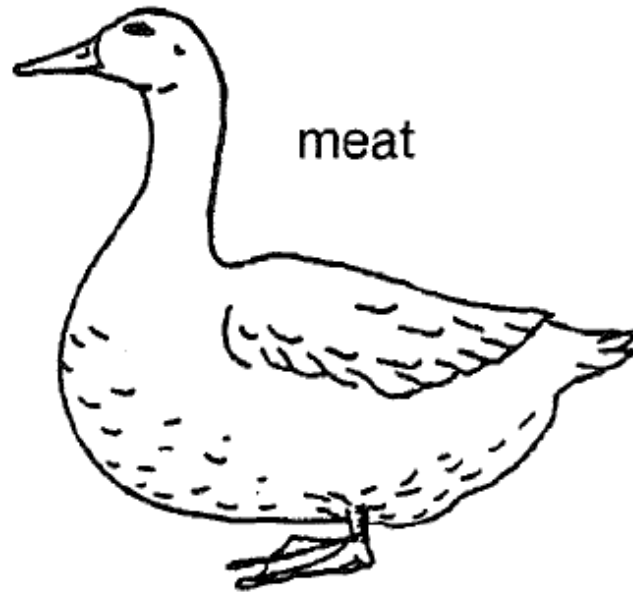
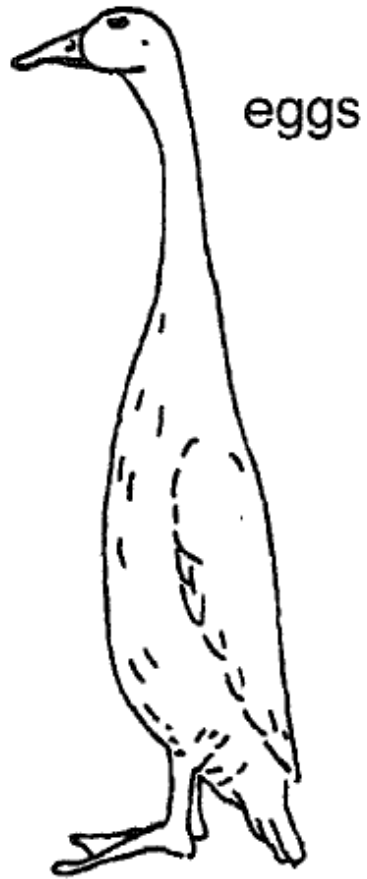
b. Noorstani duck

c. Pakistani duck

d. Watani duck

C. Choosing ducks right for your operation depends upon the reason they are being raised.

1. Ducks used for meat only are short and fat while ducks for eggs only are tall and lean.
2. Ducks used for both meat and eggs have a body shape in between these two.



II. High quality pelleted feed is important to maximize the growth rate and feed efficiency of ducks.

A. Performance will decrease as the amount of fines in a pelleted feed increases.

1. Commercial pellet binders are often used to limit fines and improve pellet integrity.
2. Although ducks can be fed mash feed, growth performance will be reduced by about 10% in comparison to that of ducks fed pelleted feed and feed wastage will be increased.

B. Ducklings should be fed a starter diet from hatch to 2 weeks of age.

1. The starter diet should be fed as 3.18 mm diameter pellets or as crumbles.
2. After 2 weeks of age, feed a grower diet as 4.76 mm diameter pellets.

C. Because young ducklings grow rapidly, they should have adequate floor, feeder, and waterer space.

1. For the first three weeks, allow 0.6 square meters of space per duckling on wire and .09 square meters per duckling on litter.
2. If confinement rearing is practiced, increase the floor space to 0.23 square meters per duckling through 7 weeks of age.

3. Ducks should be given at least 3.8 linear centimeters of feeder space and 1.27 linear centimeters of waterer space per duckling at all times.
4. Larger ducks such as the Muscovy may require some additional space.

- D. Growing ducks should be allowed free access to feed and water at all times.
1. Proper feeder and waterer height, maintenance and sanitation are essential for achieving uniform flock growth and health.
 2. Small feeders should be used until the ducklings are 2 weeks of age.
 3. Larger feed hoppers should be used for older ducks.

4. The feeder pan height should be at a level even with the back of the average duck.
5. Waterer pan height should be even with the lower neck area of the average duck.
 - a. Feeders and waterers that are too low result in excessive wastage.
 - b. Those that are too high restrict feed and water access to the smallest ducks and thus increase size variation in the flock.



III. Managing the ducks used to improve your flock will benefit both your production and your birds.

A. Select stock from flocks hatched in April and May.

1. Using males from early flocks will help insure their readiness for mating for the start of the following year.
2. Choose vigorous birds with good weight, conformation, and feathering before marketing the young flock.
3. Keep one male for each 5 to 6 females.

B. Young birds should be selected only from families with good egg production, hatchability, and fertility records.

1. Identification of males and females is necessary when selecting birds for breeder flocks and for exhibition.
2. Even in breeds that have a sex-differentiated color pattern, both sexes may resemble each other in their summer plumage.

- C. Ducks and geese can be sexed by everting the vent and examining the reproductive organs.
1. This practice requires some experience and may be more easily done with day-old birds or during the breeding season.
 2. In some breeds mature males develop characteristic curled feathers at the base of the tail.
 3. After about 6 weeks of age, the sounds ducks make can be a clue to their sex.
 - a. Females have a more definite sharp quack, while males have a sound which is not nearly so loud or harsh but more of a muffled sound.

D. Birds held for breeders must be kept from becoming too fat.

1. The breeder-developer ration fed during the holding period should contain less energy than starter and grower rations.
2. If the grower ration is continued during the holding period, gradually restrict feed to about 70 percent of the amount fed at the start.

- E. Change to a breeder-laying ration about 1 month before egg production starts.
 - 1. Don't bring birds into production before 7 months of age.
 - 2. Feeding oystershell is optional to improve eggshell quality.
 - 3. Increasing day length with lighting stimulates egg production.
 - a. Provide a 14-hour day 3 weeks before the desired egg production date.
 - b. The flock should be laying at a high rate of production within 5 to 6 weeks.
 - c. Meat-type breeds should remain above 50 percent production for about 5 months.

4. Provide breeders with a clean, dry, well-ventilated shed or house.
 - a. Allow 1.5 to 1.8 meters of floor space per bird.
 - b. Birds are often confined at night to get a maximum number of eggs and then allowed daytime access to the yard.
 - c. Provide floor level nest boxes.
5. Most eggs are laid in early morning.
 - a. Gather eggs about 7 a.m. and let the birds out of the house.
6. If some birds stay on the nests, a second collection can be made later in the day.

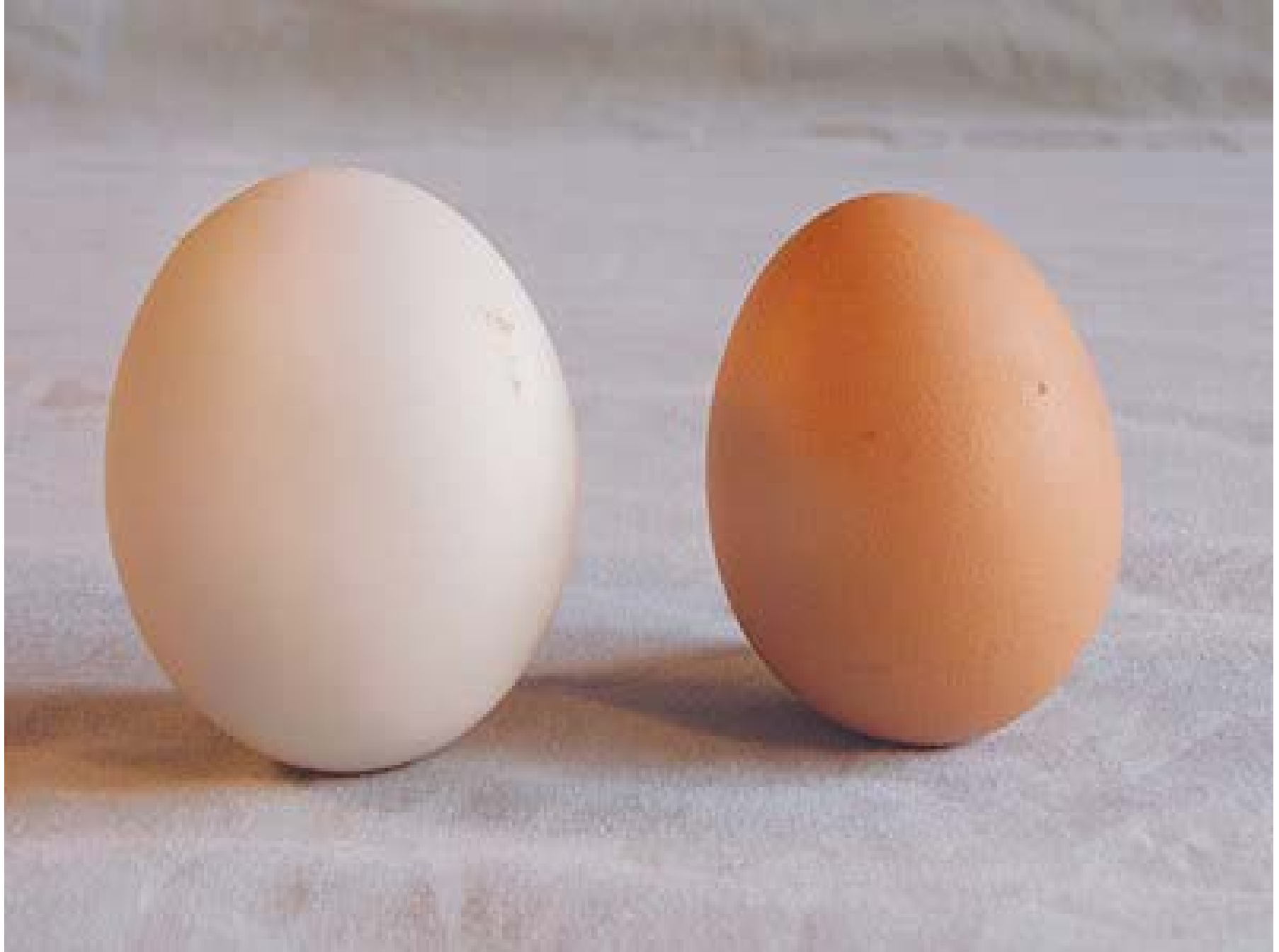
F. Clean, dry litter and nesting material will help produce clean eggs.

1. Soiled eggs should be cleaned soon after gathering.
2. They should be washed in warm water (at least 6 degrees C warmer than the eggs) containing an egg cleaning and sanitizing compound used according to the manufacturer's instructions.

G. Store eggs for hatching at 12.7 degrees C and a relative humidity of 75 percent.

1. Eggs stored longer than 2 weeks may decline in hatchability.

2. If stored more than a week, turn eggs daily to prevent yolks from sticking to shells.



Review/Summary

1. What types of ducks raised in Afghanistan?
2. What feed rations are used for ducks?
3. What practices are used to manage duck flocks?