

Improving Our Knowledge of Pastured Poultry Systems

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Abstract

The UC Davis Pastured Poultry Farm offers an opportunity for partnership between research and on-farm applications of new poultry technologies. Born out of collaboration between the UC Davis Civil Engineering Department and School of Veterinary Medicine, the Farm presents an opportunity to increase our understanding of pastured poultry systems. Little research has been conducted on pasture-raised poultry, and the lack of standardized rotation processes and mobile coop construction leaves the system at risk of poultry disease and management hazards. The Farm hopes to mitigate these issues through experimentation with different feedstuffs (e.g., black soldier fly larvae), worker-friendly mobile coops, and rotation systems that optimize pasture use. These experiments will help to develop collaborative strategies with egg producers and processors that both detect and prevent food borne contamination, as well as evaluate technologies that could decrease ammonia and harmful airborne particulates. Pastured poultry represents an alternative food system, and has the potential to increase soil fertility and mitigate the impacts of climate vulnerability. The Farm will be the nexus of research on food and occupational safety, hen health, and alternative farming technologies to be shared with the surrounding community.

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