

# Food Waste Makes Great Eggs

Rhizome Food is making better-tasting eggs with food waste. They're doing this by feeding hens a mixed ration of brewer's grain, fruit and vegetable waste, bakery waste and seafood scraps. The regional food research and incubation company is an offshoot of Stone Barns Center for Food & Agriculture and Blue Hill Restaurant. Stone Barns is, in turn, home to a wide variety of farm-related research, including wagon train chicken coops (Vol. 43, No. 5).

"We're in year two of a two-year project," explains Andrew Luzmore, Blue Hill. "We have a control flock getting a standard organic grain ration, and our research flock getting the mixed ration. The eggs from the waste-fed flock are outperforming the eggs from the grain-fed flock."

The eggs are evaluated for nutrients, appearance, and taste using blind taste panels. The results to date indicate 27% more Vitamin A, 33% more Vitamin E and 28% more Omega-3s than the grain-fed flock.

The results validated a suspicion Blue Hill Farms had long had.

"Years ago, our farmers started feeding our hens scraps from Blue Hill's kitchens," explains Luzmore. "The hens thrived, and the eggs were delicious. Since then, we've been experimenting with how far we could go."

The current project formalized experimentation with support from a grant from Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE). Food waste was selected for a nutrient-dense diet. An expert in animal nutrition put together the ration. The brewer's grain is inoculated with *Lactobacillus*, which helps solidify it and make it more shelf-stable.

"We started out with the research flock getting waste food in 10% of their ration," recalls Luzmore. "We kept increasing it in 10% increments until we hit 90% in October. Feed costs plummeted, and the eggs were the



Hens eating mixed ration food waste.

best our cooks at our Blue Hill Restaurant had ever tasted."

Given Blue Hill's reputation for fine dining, the cooks have an appreciation for great-tasting ingredients. Luckily for them, the experiment continues. A duplicate effort is taking place in Maine at a second farm.

"We hope to publish our data at the end of 2026," says Luzmore. "While we have early results, we want to be diligent with the research and have the two full years of data to share."

Luzmore notes that with 40% of food reportedly going to waste in the U.S., there's a lot of potential feed going to waste as well.

"When 190 million U.S. acres grow corn and soybeans for animals, an egg powered by food waste feels like a triple win," says Luzmore. "Less grain, less waste and more flavor."

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Jaw Boss can handle branches or small logs, as well as dimension lumber ranging from 2 to 9 in. in diameter.

## Jaws Grip Firewood Or Lumber

The Jaw Boss from Tie Boss works equally well gripping firewood or dimension lumber. Designed to slip into any 2-in. receiver hitch, it keeps saw teeth away from rocks, dirt and wood on the ground.

Rest the log or lumber on V-shaped jaws at the end of the shank while setting its end under the diagonal jaws at the other end of the shank. Gravity locks the wood in place.

The U.S.-made Jaw Boss can handle branches or small logs, as well as dimension lumber ranging from 2 to 9 in. in diameter. The design ensures it grips uneven or irregular logs, as well as straight logs and lumber.

The receiver hitch design makes the Jaw

Boss as mobile as it is versatile. It can be used with trucks, tractors, ATVs or UTVs wherever cutting is needed. The device is priced at \$140 plus shipping.

The only limitation noted by the manufacturer is that weight shouldn't exceed 125 lbs.

Users describe it as back-saving and safer than cutting firewood on the ground.

"No more wobbling or rolling," said one. Another appreciated that it kept chainsaws away from workers' feet.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Tie Boss, 1711 Commerce Dr., Piqua, Ohio 45335 (ph 937-570-4529; www.tieboss.com).



To get the most out of tillage equipment, Kuntz's mantra is go fast, go shallow, go home. To do so, he emphasizes not only leveling but also removing attachments from the rear of the implement.

## Rapid Tillage System Delivers Weed Control And More

Roger Kuntz has spent nearly 50 years helping growers master their tillage practices. The former head of the Flex-King service department is still at it. He and his son, Adam, travel across Kansas and surrounding states, advising farmers struggling with tillage, particularly those using Flex-King tillage equipment. Central to that is his Rapid Tillage System. He says it kills weeds, reduces soil compaction, and extends equipment life.

"People are going broke with spraying and instead are going back to tillage," says Kuntz. "The problem is they need information on how to till. We go out with our pickup and tools and fix things, but there's much that people can do on their own."

Kuntz developed a guidebook for tillage returnees or those tilling for the first time. It covers virtually all tillage equipment and explains how it works. The guide is free, as is a leveling guide he sends on request.

Kuntz identifies major problems that tillers encounter and ask about. They include uneven depth, ridging, pulling hard, poor weed control, and failure to penetrate hard ground.

He notes that uneven depth has become a greater problem as tillage equipment has increased from one section to as many as 11.

"The axle-to-frame ratio is critical and is adjusted with turnbuckles or anchors to the series cylinders," he says. "Getting this right allows for going shallow at an even depth. It's the most complex part of the leveling procedure."

He notes that ridging is addressed by the exact tilt of the unit.

"It must be nose-up by about two degrees," says Kuntz. "Choice of blades will have a major effect."

He explains that pulling hard results from uneven depth and ridging.

"Attachments to the rear of the machine are suspect," he adds.

According to Kuntz, poor weed control results from failures in uniform depth, tilt, speed and blade choice.

"The most frustrating of all is that the implement will not penetrate hard ground," says Kuntz. "Usually, the owner has just purchased a blunt, thick and poorly designed blade that's more of a bulldozer, with a long heel under the blade that makes it a virtual ski in the field."

To get the most out of tillage equipment,

Kuntz's mantra is go fast, go shallow, go home. To do so, he emphasizes not only leveling but also removing attachments from the rear of the implement.

Going deep only adds to the problem, says Kuntz. He suggests it only makes the tractor work harder, adding to maintenance and shortening its working life. At the same time, the extra weight from attachments increases maintenance and the risk of failure of the tillage equipment itself.

When it comes to blades, Kuntz recalls the Noble Inlaid Bottom Surface Blade as the best he's seen. A blunt blade, he adds, crumbles, pushes and ridges the dirt, costing another 25% in horsepower and fuel.

"The only hope for maximum tillage performance is a high-quality, low-cost bottom surface blade," says Kuntz. "It'll turn into a chrome-like, smooth surface that'll be sharp and pull easily."

With attachments removed and the proper blade, Kuntz advises that the only remaining factor for maximum speed is depth.

"Deep farming is your enemy," he says. "Our suggested speed for blade plowing is at least 8 mph. The weed root system's life support is shattered. It lies bare-root, dead on top of the ground."

Recognizing that seeing is believing, Kuntz suggests that growers try his recommendation of shallow blades first.

"Some have older, smaller units they could modify at minimal cost," he says. "The alternative is to replace blades and simply lift up attachments. If they like what they see, remove the attachments for good."

Kuntz has developed several tools to help farmers with their tillage. He designed a replacement turnbuckle for Sunflower, Flex-King and Richardson tillage systems. It's a heavy-duty design with 1 1/2-in. threads that allows sections to be adjusted evenly. He also offers rebuilt and new turnbuckles with 1 1/2-in. threads for Noble units.

He also offers a replacement for floppy tongues on tillage equipment.

"Our Dual Point Rigid Tongue eliminates holding and propping, is durable, and accepts today's larger drawbar pins," says Kuntz. "Any brand can be converted with the dimension supplied for a two-pin hookup."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, K-Tech, 5251 County Road X, Grainfield, Kan. 67737 (ph 785-673-5560).

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