

Rosebank Farms

PASTURE RAISED CHICKENS & TURKEYS



Spring 2018 newsletter, written by Andrea Gunner of Rosebank Farms.

Mistral Gris - made for pasturing

We are planning to produce two batches of Mistral Gris chickens this year. After trialling many batches of chickens with French genetics over the last 7 years, the Mistral Gris chicks that we bought from True North hatchery (www.truenorthfarm.ca) were the healthiest, tastiest birds AND had the nicest disposition of the ones that we have had on trial.

The reason that we have been trialling birds with French genetics is that the French poultry industry has been commercially raising birds on pasture since the 1960's and has developed a variety of commercially available genetic lineages suitable for outdoor production, with stronger legs, and healthier cardiovascular systems (less susceptible to heart attacks) than the North American white birds.

Disposition is important to us because flighty birds or overly docile birds present contrasting management problems. Flighty birds are prone to excessive stress which can be caused by a number of factors eg. someone entering the brooder too quickly, sneezing or coughing. This causes them to panic, crash around and injure themselves or each other. We are always trying hard to keep them happy and safe, avoiding any stress hormones such as adrenaline.

In contrast, overly docile birds (the white ones) are easy pickings either in their brooder pens or out on pasture because they are generally very intent on eating and are slow moving, making them easy targets for aerial predators including crows, hawks and owls.