

Things To Consider BEFORE You Hatch



Before you start hatching out every emu egg you can get your hands on, here a few things you should decide in advance.

1. If you are planning to grow-out the chicks for processing, it is very important to find an emu processing plant in advance (USDA or State Inspected, if you plan to retail or wholesale the meat for human consumption) and plan out the logistics on how you will transport the emus to that plant. Some processing plants have a very long wait list. Make your appointment early to prevent feeding emus that should have been processed months ago.

2. Another thing to consider is, "What will you do with the meat and oil?" Will you sell retail from your farm? You will need to find out if your state, county or township requires a license or inspection of your freezer facilities. You will probably need a license for selling meat and a zoning permit to sell from your farm. Do you have wholesale buyers for the meat and fat/oil? Will you sell at Farmers Markets and local stores? Or, will you sell and ship only on the internet through your website?

You can contact the companies that sell emu oil on the Certified Business Members (CBM) list to see if any of them are buying emu fat or fully refined oil. www.aea-emu.org/where-to-buy/. You can check with an Emu Oil Refiner to see if they are buying or know of anyone who is. You could ask on the AEA Members Email List and/or place a FREE (to members) ad in the AEA Newsletter for fat, oil or meat.

Finding a place to sell your excess emu fat or oil is one of the things that new and/or prospective emu growers should know in advance BEFORE a large number of chicks are hatched and raised to processing age, especially at today's feed prices.

3. You may decide to home butcher (AEA has a CD on how to do this) and sell the carcass as raw meat for dog food. You can then have the fat refined as oil to sell. You will still need to know where you will find your customers.

4. After you figure out how many emus you will need to process to replenish the meat and oil you keep on-hand to supply your customers, will you sell the extra chicks you hatch? You may need to register for an APHIS/USDA license unless you sell only to other emu growers who are raising emus for agricultural purposes.

www.aphis.usda.gov/awa/bird-standards

There is a lot to think about before you hatch this season.
