

tend to disappear or to be purchased by the larger producers, since they are not as price competitive.

Mexico's technical parameters have improved significantly in the "technified" sectors, as a result of better feeding and sanitary patterns, and are similar to those in other developed countries: the feed to meat conversion index has decreased from 4.5 kg of feed per kg. of meat in 1980 to 2.5 kg in 1990. The average carcass weight is 1.4 kg on chicken and 1.2 kg on hens. The extraction rate has also increased to approximately 400%. Genetics have also played an important role in this sector to increase productivity. Most progenitors are imported, since genetics are not very developed in Mexico yet. On the other hand, reproducing hens are produced in Mexico. Pure breeds most commonly used in Mexico are White Cornish and White Plymouth Rock. The commercial lines which issue from these are Hybro, Arbor Acres, Ross, Hubbard, Indian River, Pilch, Peterson, Shaver Starbro and Cobbs-Vantress.

On the other end are a multitude of family operations which represent the majority of producers but which are basically oriented towards their own consumption. Some eggs are for consumption, while others are for further reproduction. They use low productivity cross-breeds, often have sanitary problems and high mortality rates, and have bad feeds, based on garbage and whatever the animals pick outdoors. Only sporadically are the chicken fed grains or other balanced feed.

Meat production, on the other hand has steadily increased since 1980, at an average annual rate of 7%. The number of animals sacrificed reached 445 million in 1990, as compared to 259.5 million in 1980 and meat production increased from 399.2 million tons of carcass to 756.5 million tons (11.5% of which corresponds to laying hens and breeding animals). This has been due to an increase in both the numbers and the weight per bird as a result of the increased productivity experienced by the industry. At the same time, demand has been shifting from beef and pork meat towards chicken due to its lower price and for health considerations, since chicken is known to have less fat content. Chicken meat consumption as a percentage of total meat consumption has increased from 12.7% in 1980 to 24.5% in 1990. The following table shows poultry meat production in thousand tons between 1985 and 1990.

	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Poultry	588.6	672.6	672.9	654.3	611.0	756.5

Source: Boletín Mensual de Información Básica del Sector Agropecuario y Forestal, SARH

The Mexican poultry industry has gradually become more productive through its vertical integration and the technical improvements