Slow Growth Broilers (Alternative Breeds)
How to Define?

• Heritage Breed or Cross?
• Daily Weight Gain? And at what age or weight?
• Feather Color?
A Working Definition

• Working definition = no more than 50gms per day growth (0.11# per day)

• Current Average Growth Rates are about 60gms per day (0.13# per day)

• Large Birds can be well over 70 gms per day (0.16# per day)
Other Characteristics

• Colored Feathers
• Active
• Perch
• Hardy
• Farmers enjoy raising chickens like this!
• Older facilities are productive again?
• Love to go outside?
• Preferable meat quality?
• Benefits of a drier chicken house?
Why?

• Because “we have gone too far” and the current fast growing broiler birds have too many “Growth Rate Related Issues”?
  – Leg Health
  – Feathering issues
  – High Moisture
  – Meat Quality has become an issue

• The Breeder Birds are pretty severely restricted to keep them production (and reproductive)
What Determines Growth Rate for Broilers

• Feed Intake is the primary factor
  – More specifically protein/energy intake and retention.

• Modern broilers are selected for the high capacity for feed intake.

• Heritage strain broilers have a lower appetite.
Achieving Slower Growth

Genetics
- A pure Heritage Breed or Cross with Commercial Breed
- Crosses will have lower appetites and consume less feed.

Nutrition
- Primarily strict Protein Intake
- Birds can partially compensate with higher intake
- Supplementing with whole grains and limit
This is a different business

- 7 or 8 more days to 6#s
- Poorer Feed Conversion
- Likely lower chick cost
- Much more active
- Drier litter
- Better Livability
- Less breast meat, more leg meat
- Processability
Parents

Male

Females
Broilers

Current Modern Breed Cross

Trial Cross 2016
• Current Modern Breed Cross

• Trial Cross 2016
They like perches....if they are designed right!
These are different birds!