

Turkeys are dumber than chickens

By RHONDA WATTERS  
Battalion Staff

Sitting down to a big roast turkey dinner on Thanksgiving, with steaming hot cornbread dressing, candied yams and home-made pumpkin pie, probably the last thing on a person's mind is where his Thanksgiving turkey came from.

But turkeys have to come from somewhere, and that somewhere is a turkey farm.

Although small-scale turkey farms used to be a common sight across the country, the day of the hometown turkey raiser is almost over. Turkey farms have become increasingly more commercial and today they are almost entirely owned and run by meat-processing companies.

Franklin Loehr, co-owner of Loehr and Weeber Feeds in Caldwell, owns one of the last small turkey farms in Brazos County. It is located on the Brazos River between Bryan and Caldwell.

"I raise about two bunches of turkeys a year," he said, "with 10,000 turkeys in a bunch. We raise them all year round."

Loehr, who has been raising turkeys for about 20 years, said he buys one-day old birds from Swift and Company in Marlin, where they are bred in a hatchery. When they are 18-20 weeks old, he sells the live birds back to Swift, where they

are weighed, graded and dressed for packaging as Butterball turkeys.

For the first five days after he gets the turkeys, Loehr hand feeds and waters the birds. The rest of the time, automatic water jugs and feeders are used.

"Turkeys eat about 50-70 pounds of feed average in their lifetime," he said.

Female turkeys are called hens and male turkeys, toms. Toms are generally bigger and weigh more and are used commercially for hospitals, cafeterias and like businesses. Hens are a more suitable size for families.

Loehr keeps his turkeys in "brooder houses" which are heated and ventilated. For every 10,000 turkeys he has 30 brooder houses. Each house is surrounded by a tin ring that reflects heat to help keep the turkeys warm.

"Turkeys are dumber than chickens," Loehr said. "They don't have any sense.

"They pile up if they get cold, and smother."

Loehr said once the turkeys are to the stage of automatic watering and feeding, it takes little work to raise them. All he has to do is keep the brooder houses clean and make sure the birds are getting enough water and feed.

Though raising the turkeys takes so little work, Loehr said turkey



Turkeys are kept in "brooder houses" which are heated and ventilated. For every 10,000 turkeys, about 30 brooder houses are needed. Photo by Sam Stroder

farming is not without its problems.

"This year wolves were a problem," Loehr said. "Disease can also be a problem."

Loehr said a more minor problem is theft.

"I have known people to come and steal turkeys," he said.

In spite of the problems, Loehr said he usually sells 85-90 percent of his turkeys back to Swift each year, for about \$1 a head.

# Shakespeare returns to Aggieland

By EILEEN WALL  
Battalion Reporter

This week, after almost a decade's absence, Shakespeare will return to an Aggie stage in the form of his comedy, "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

The last time a Shakespearean play was performed here was in the fall of 1970, when the Aggie Players performed "As You Like It," said Vicki Martinez. Martinez is a mem-

ber of the Theater Arts Section of the English Department, which is performing the play.

"As You Like It" was performed in Guinn Hall, she said, which was located where the Rudder Complex now stands. It was the last play performed in Guinn before it was torn down.

The reason Shakespeare has not been performed here recently, Martinez said, was that the Aggie

Players were working as a club, and wasn't big enough to tackle Shakespeare. Now, she said, Texas A&M has a theater arts department to back the Aggie Players up.

Now that Shakespeare is back at Aggieland, it looks like he's here to stay because the Aggie Players are planning to do at least one of the

bard's plays every four years, Martinez said.

The Players are excited about performing the play, Martinez said. "This is the one that everyone is looking forward to, and Shakespeare looks good on a resume."

A complex technical design is in the works for this play, Martinez said, and will include a set with a

working fountain.

Live renaissance music, written and performed by Penelope Kostlynyck, will provide music for the production.

"A Midsummer Night's Dream" will be performed through Saturday, Nov. 17, in Rudder Theater. Tickets are \$2 with ID and available at the MSC Box Office.

## FOCUS

### THE BATTALION

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**Contributing to this issue were:** Lee Roy Leschper Jr., Beth Calhoun, Keith Taylor, Sam Stroder, Cheryl Cessna, Clay Cockrill, Rhonda Watters and Margaret Johnson.

**Editor:** Doug Graham

**On the Cover:** It's time again for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Sometimes, you can't tell where one holiday ends and the other begins because all you do is eat Turkey for three weeks. For a look at a turkey's life before the holidays, see this page. Photo by Sam Stroder.



Owen Sonik, a junior philosophy major and Melissa Bradley, a sophomore theater arts major rehearse a scene from "A Midsummer Night's Dream." The Shakespearean comedy will be performed nightly through Nov. 17. Photo by Clay Cockrill

## 'Dream' contains 4 plots

"A Midsummer Night's Dream" is a Shakespearean comedy written about 1595. The title refers to the night before June 24, which was St. John the Baptist's festival.

To the Elizabethans, the holiday was related to enchantment and witchcraft, represented in the play by the fairies.

The title also suggests what the Elizabethans called "midsummer madness," in which it was thought intense summer heat caused strange delusions of the imagination.

The play itself contains four plots. First, the wedding of Theseus, Duke of Athens, to Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons. Second, there is the soap opera type plot of the four lovers, Demetrius and Helena, Lysander and Hermia. This makes up the play's main action.

Third, there is the "play within a play" performed by the Rustics to entertain the royal wedding party.

And finally, there is the plot of the fairies, Oberon and Titiana, who, because of their own lovers quarrel, become involved in the first three plots.

It is this interaction that provides the "madness" of the play, and enables the audience, along with Shakespeare, to laugh at love.