

# The perfect protein

By Matt Miller

John and Andria Volkmann understand there is a lot more to the turkey industry than just carving a bird on Thanksgiving Day. The industry has become a way of life and something the two take great pride in since they started the family business in 2002.

"Yes, we're busy around Thanksgiving, but that's no different than any other time of year," John said. "The hours don't just pick up the fourth Thursday in November or only during the holiday season; it's a full-time job."

These are the words of a successful, knowledgeable turkey farmer who helps to contribute to the more than 10.5 million turkeys produced annually in the state. Located southwest of Jewel, the Volkmann family farm, which includes two children, raises approximately 100,000 turkeys each year.

"It really is a family business," Andria said. "John takes care of the turkeys that are just about ready for market, which are in the larger barns, and I tend to the baby turkeys, called poults."

The family sees the birds daily from the time they are hatched through 19 weeks.

"It's rewarding to see the birds to market at more than 40 pounds," John said. "It's a lot of work, but it's well worth it."

Over the years, the Volkmanns have also become advocates by spreading the word about the healthful benefits of turkey. Known as the "perfect protein," turkey has fewer calories and less fat than chicken and beef.

"People can use turkey in a variety of ways," John said. "It tastes great, and people are quickly discovering its high nutritional value. Our family takes great pride in providing a high-quality protein for others." **RELISH**



Photo courtesy of Iowa Turkey Federation

The Volkmann family has been involved in the turkey industry since 2002.

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