

National Turkey Off to Disneyland



Every year for the past 19 years, a turkey has been given to the president of the United States shortly before Thanksgiving. And each year, that turkey -- the National Thanksgiving Turkey -- has received a “presidential pardon.” The president uses his powers as president to protect the turkey so it will never be served for supper.

So where does the pardoned turkey go after it is safely off the dinner menu? Since 2005, the pardoned turkey has retired to what some people call the “happiest places on Earth” -- Disneyland or Disney World. This year’s pardoned turkey, and another turkey that serves as its standby, will move to Disneyland in California. Last year’s lucky turkeys -- which were named *May* and *Flower* -- were flown to Disney World in Florida. They led the Thanksgiving Day parade there. Now they have a nice place to live in the park.

In 1989, President George H.W. Bush began the tradition of pardoning turkeys. Up until three years ago, the pardoned turkeys were sent off to Frying Pan Farm Park, a family park in Virginia, after they appeared with the president at the White House. But the current President Bush joked that Frying Pan Farm Park didn’t sound like a good place for retired turkeys to live. Some Disney workers suggested that the turkeys might move to their parks instead.

NEWS WORD BOX

pardon	retired
tradition	appeared
contact	suggested

MORE ABOUT THE NATIONAL THANKSGIVING TURKEY

- The tradition of pardoning a turkey has been going on for 19 years, but the tradition of a National Thanksgiving Turkey dates back to 1947.
- Each year, a farmer picks out a few turkeys shortly after they hatch. The farmer picks turkeys that might make a good National Thanksgiving Turkey. Those turkeys will get special care and have lots of contact with people. That contact will help prepare them for their moment in the spotlight with the president.

THINK ABOUT THE NEWS

Last year’s turkeys were named *May* and *Flower*.
Do you think those are good names for turkeys?
If you could name this year’s National Thanksgiving Turkeys,
what names would you choose to give them?