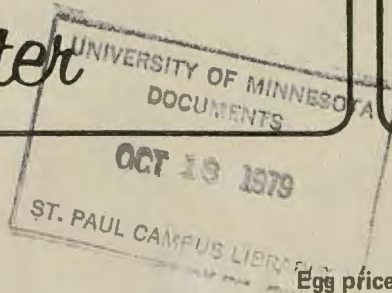


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Poultry Patter



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ITEMS OF INTEREST TO MINNESOTA'S EGG INDUSTRY

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1979-80 EGG OUTLOOK

Egg production is expected to stay 2 to 3 percent above year-earlier levels during the balance of 1979 and into 1980. Egg prices will rise less than usual this summer and fall but likely will average above a year ago. This outlook on the egg industry situation appeared in the September 1979, USDA *Poultry and Egg Situation*.

First half egg production up

Egg output during January-June was up 2.5 percent from the first half of 1978. Nearly all of the increase was due to a larger laying flock. On January 1, 1979, 1 percent more hens and pullets were in the laying flock than a year earlier. Favorable profit margins caused producers to reduce culling of old flocks during February and March, so layer numbers on April 1 were up 3 percent. After Easter, expectations of a sharp seasonal egg price decline and declining profit margins caused producers to increase culling in April and May. Nearly 6 million more mature chickens were inspected in federally inspected plants during April and May than in 1978. As a result, layer numbers on June 1 were up only 1 percent. Egg prices did not decline as much as expected in the spring, and profit margins generally remained favorable. Culling again dropped sharply in June. This and a few more replacement pullets resulted in layer numbers on July 1, 1979 being up a little more than 2 percent from the previous July 1. Despite the ups and downs in culling, total first half mature chicken slaughter was nearly the same both years.

Second half production to continue expansion

Egg production this summer and fall is expected to be 2 to 3 percent above both the first half of 1979 and July-December 1978. The nation's laying flock on August 1, 1979 totaled 281 million layers, up a little more than 2 percent from August 1978. Layer numbers will continue to increase seasonally in coming months and stay above a year earlier because of more replacement pullets entering the flock.

During the first quarter of 1979, producers hatched 7 percent more egg-type pullets than a year earlier and 4 percent more in the second quarter. Although culling may be heavier this year than last, the increase likely will not fully offset the increase in flock replacements unless producer returns are less than currently expected.

Producer returns are expected to remain positive during the balance of 1979 and into 1980; however, they will be less favorable than in 1978. Production and marketing costs will be above a year earlier.

Egg prices above 1978

Egg prices in January-June 1979 averaged well above year-earlier levels despite increased supplies. For the first 6 months of 1979, New York wholesale prices for Grade A large cartoned eggs averaged 69 cents a dozen, 4 cents above the second half of 1978 and 11 cents above a year earlier. Substantially higher prices for all high-protein foods, apparently, have caused consumers to substitute eggs for some other higher-priced protein foods. Retail prices during April-June 1979 averaged 83 cents a dozen. This was down 6 cents from the previous quarter but 12 cents above the same months of 1978.

Egg prices likely will increase less than usual this summer and fall but will still average above year-earlier levels. Seasonal price rises will be limited by increased egg production and a lagging economy. Grade A large cartoned eggs in New York this summer and fall are expected to average 2 to 4 cents a dozen above the 65 cents for July-December 1978. Continued relatively high prices for other high-protein foods will bolster the demand for eggs. However, if egg producers continue to expand, prices in 1980 could drop well below 1979 levels and below their cost of production and marketing.

Consumption of shell eggs and the shell equivalent of egg products during January-June 1979 totaled an estimated 139 eggs per person, 2 eggs more than the 137 eggs consumed during the first half of 1978. More eggs were used this year for hatchery purposes, but exports and military purchases were down.

AVIAN INFLUENZA

Avian influenza has hit five turkey farms near Paynesville, Minnesota, according to tests recently completed by the Avian Disease Research Group at the University of Minnesota. Initial testing indicates the outbreak is caused by a completely different influenza virus than the one involved with the Kandiyohi outbreak in late July and early August. This virus seems to be related to the virus which affected three chicken flocks in Minnesota last fall. Egg production was severely affected in that outbreak. Affected farms are being quarantined by the owners to help prevent spread.

Because there is no treatment for this disease, prevention is critical, according to David Halvorson, extension veterinarian-avian health. Sanitation and isolation must be relied on to keep the disease from spreading to healthy flocks. Egg producers should keep the following precautions in mind:

- Allow no unnecessary visitors in poultry houses.
- Don't visit other poultry farms.
- Any visitor should arrive freshly showered, in clean clothes, and then be provided with clean overalls and boots.
- Truck drivers should not enter the bird area.
- Trucks which have been on turkey ranges should not be allowed on other farms without a complete cleanup.
- Lock gates and doors to control entry to the premises.

Because birds can shed this virus before they show symptoms of illness, don't assume any flock is free of influenza. If any of the following symptoms are observed, get an accurate diagnosis immediately:

1. Mortality or production drop.
2. Depression or lack of singing.
3. Sick or wheezing.
4. Messy vents.

If you have any questions, contact either: Dr. David Halvorson (612)373-1152 or Dr. John Newman (612)373-1132.

POULTRY SCHOLARSHIPS

Three achievement awards are available to young people involved in poultry projects through the Midwest Poultry Federation (MPF). One award, provided by Jerome Foods, Inc. of Barron, WI, will give slight preference to turkey projects but is open to any young person carrying a poultry production project in the 8-state MPF area. Gillis Agricultural Systems, Inc., Willmar, MN provides an award open to any young person from Iowa, Minnesota, or South Dakota with a poultry production project. Jennie-O Foods, Inc. of Willmar, MN is providing an award for Minnesota youth carrying turkey production projects.

The award winners will each receive an appropriate plaque at the Federation Convention banquet. On enrollment in college, technical school, or vocational school beyond the high school level, each will receive a \$500 scholarship. It is anticipated that three awards will be given, but the MPF Youth Activities Committee reserves the right to limit awards to worthy entries only.

Any boy or girl regularly enrolled in 4-H, FFA, or other organized or adult supervised poultry project in a state eligible for competition can participate. Entrants must be age 15 but not age 20 by January 31, 1980 and not beyond the freshman level in college.

Entries will consist of a completed personal information form, record books pertaining to the projects, completed project summary forms showing costs, income and performance, a supporting story written by the entrant, and other supporting materials desired by the entrant. For entry forms and further information, contact Mel Hamre, extension poultry specialist, 202 Peters Hall, 1404 Gortner Ave., University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN 55108. January 1, 1980 is the deadline for entries to be received.

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Poultry industry members should encourage young people with poultry projects to apply for these scholarships. Young people trained in a wide variety of fields are needed to fill positions in the poultry industry. A scholarship can encourage further education.

FALL MANAGEMENT TIPS

As the fall weather cools, attention needs to be paid to the ventilation system in most poultry houses. Be sure louvers and other ventilation openings close properly so they don't let in excessive cold air. Some ventilation systems have openings that should be closed during the cooler portions of the year to properly maintain house temperatures and to keep winter snows from blowing into the building. Keep in mind that you must have enough air exchange to provide a good environment for the birds, but that excessive cooling means increased feed consumption by the birds to maintain body heat.

Rats and mice can waste considerable feed, as well as cause disease and parasite problems and damage equipment and insulation. Before long, many rodents will be looking for comfortable winter housing. Eliminate sources of entry for these pests. If entry to the house can be controlled, populations can be kept in check with a good baiting program.

Most poultry houses require little maintenance during the first few years of life. If a building has aged, check it for minor prevention repairs that would be more costly outlays later. Were there any signs of a leaky roof during recent heavy rains? This may mean major repairs are needed or just an inspection to replace a few nails or loose flashings. Proper building maintenance is an overall part of good flock management.

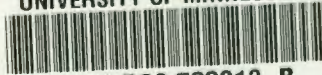
Eggs pick up odors and flavors from the environment. To prevent these quality problems, egg storage and handling rooms should be used only for eggs. Using the egg room for storage of fruits and vegetables produced on the farm can be a potential source of odor and flavor problems in your eggs. Keeping the egg room in a clean and sanitary condition can be another way of minimizing these problems of egg operation.

Costs of paper, printing, and mailing continue to increase. Many Agricultural Extension Service publications, including Poultry Patter, are being affected by these increased costs and publishing is on a less frequent basis during this period of printing curtailment.

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