

Poultry Patter



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ITEMS OF INTEREST TO MINNESOTA'S EGG INDUSTRY

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Egg Day

An egg day program for egg industry personnel will convene on the University of Minnesota St. Paul Campus, Thursday, September 7 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Peters Hall Auditorium. A varied program should interest persons involved in all phases of egg production.

PROGRAM

Morning

- 9:00 Meeting the Protein Needs of Young Layers
 —Neil Allen, assistant professor, Department of Animal Science
- 9:45 Inheritance of Egg Shell Color
 —R. N. Shoffner, professor, Department of Animal Science
- 10:15 Coffee
- 10:30 Can Pullet Growers Use Some Techniques Being Tried in Housing and Management of Turkeys?
 —R. W. Berg, Extension poultry specialist
- 11:00 Poultry Behavior Studies
 —R. E. Phillips, professor, Department of Animal Science
- 11:30 Lunch

Afternoon

- 1:00 Recent Development in Lighting Programs
 —Mel Hamre, Extension poultry specialist
- 1:30 *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* Eradication Procedures
 —Dr. David Halvorson, Extension veterinarian-avian health
- 2:00 Avian Adenoviruses
 —Dr. John Newman, associate professor, Department of Veterinary Pathobiology, College of Veterinary Medicine
- 2:30 Progress Report on Obtaining Adequate Chicken Research Facilities at the University of Minnesota
 —R. N. Shoffner, secretary, Poultry Advisory Council

Minnesota Nutrition Conference

The 39th Minnesota Nutrition Conference will be September 18-19, 1978 at the Thunderbird Motel, Bloomington, Minnesota. It is of interest to nutritionists and others involved in livestock and poultry feeding. For more information contact the Office of Special Programs, 405 Coffey Hall, 1420 Eckles Ave., University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN 55108 or phone (612) 373-0725.

Egg Marketing Seminar

The annual Minnesota-Iowa Egg Marketing Seminar is scheduled October 4-5, at Albert Lea, Minnesota. Many Minnesota egg

processors and egg handlers attend these educational sessions. In September registration materials and program details will be mailed to the egg marketing and handling segments of the industry. Registration materials can also be obtained from the Extension Poultry Specialist, 202 Peters Hall, 1404 Gortner Ave., University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN 55108 or phone (612) 373-0894.

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 7-state MPF area. Gillis Agricultural Systems, Inc., Willmar, MN provides an award open to any young person from Iowa or Minnesota 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, 1979.

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 Extension Poultry Specialist Mel Hamre, 202 Peters Hall, 1404 Gortner Ave., University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN 55108. January 1, 1979 is the deadline for entries to be received.

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.

Egg Cooler Maintenance

Keep egg cooler temperatures in the 55°-60°F range. A lower temperature requires much more electrical energy and is not necessary to maintain quality during short-term egg storage. Minimize travel in and out of the cooler. Check seals on the cooler door and the seal around the refrigerator unit to minimize air leakage. Keep unit filters and condensers clean to maximize cooling efficiency. Turn off lights in cooler and work rooms when not needed.

Eggs pick up odors and flavors from the environment. To prevent this, egg storage and handling rooms should be used only for eggs. If fruits and vegetables produced on the farm are stored with eggs, odor and flavor problems in eggs can result. Garden produce can also be a source of molds that may contaminate egg cases and fillers. Keeping the egg room clean and sanitary minimizes these problems.

Force Molting

Don Bell, Riverside County, California farm advisor, recently discussed, in his newsletter, several questions relating to force molting. On water removal he stated the majority of published molting programs include a recommendation for 2 or 3 days of water removal. Experience has been somewhat inconclusive, but the last completed experiment showed no net advantage for water removal. He thinks water removal offers some degree of risk, especially during the summer months, and cannot be justified in terms of improved performance.

He outlines the following University of California general recommendations for force molting:

1. On day one, discontinue artificial lights in open housing or reduce to 8 hours in windowless housing.
2. Remove all feed for days 1 to 10.
3. Feed cracked grain for 2 to 3 weeks free choice.
4. At the completion of the grain feeding period, return artificial lights to your conventional program and return to layer mash—free choice.
5. Do not remove water at any time.

That's it. A very simple program that works and gives excellent results. Its primary characteristics are: simplicity, low cost, and high subsequent performance. All birds get equal treatment resulting in a uniform recovery.

A few tips:

1. Watch daily mortality and increase feed withdrawal period to 12 days if the flock can stand it.
2. Supplement the grain if your nutritionist advises.
3. Consider feeding one load of pullet developer at the end of the grain feeding period with added oyster shell. Bell hasn't tried this technique, but others have and it seems to have a degree of merit. Those birds wanting to come back early can pick out oyster shells and have a fairly well-balanced diet. The slower birds don't have to eat higher levels of calcium this way.

Should you molt your flock at all, and if so, should you molt once or twice? Bell says tailor the answer to the individual set of circumstances. Molting is done to reduce replacement costs on a per-dozen basis. While doing this, average production is decreased and other costs are elevated. Usually, higher net replacement costs (initial cost minus salvage) and lower egg prices tend to favor the use of force molting.

California producers should force molt each flock once at 65 weeks of age and sell 40 weeks later at 105 weeks. However, look at this in terms of individual standards of performance and economic conditions. There are farms in California with their own peculiar set of conditions that cannot justify any type of molting program. Others can justify two molts. This is a question that can be answered with a high degree of certainty if all aspects are considered.

One of the most repeatable observations about molting is improvement in shell quality. Egg shell improvement (cracks and roughness) usually returns to an equivalent level of a 10-month old pullet flock when molting is done at 65 weeks of age. This represents about a 50 percent improvement in the total decline during the first cycle. The older the flock is at molting, the less the recovery.

If egg shell problems continue, there are usually only two correction methods. First, shorten each laying cycle. This is why most Californians now molt their flocks between 60 and 70 weeks of age. Second, consider switching to a chicken strain with better egg shells.

Mortality, as a result of the force molting stress, varies from farm to farm because of the different methods employed, condition of the flocks, previous mortality rate, age at molt, and season at molt. Bell feels that mortality is generally too high when it exceeds:

- 1.0% during the first week
- 1.5% during the first 10 days
- 2.5% during the first 5 weeks
- 3.0% during the first 8 weeks

Set a limit of so many dead birds for a certain period and accumulate daily figures. If your limit begins approaching too rapidly, you may have to modify your molting procedure.

For example, Bell recommends a 10-day feed withdrawal period with a limit of 1.5 percent mortality. If you are molting 10,000 hens, you should be concerned about the stress on the flock if you reached 150 dead hens before the tenth day.

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