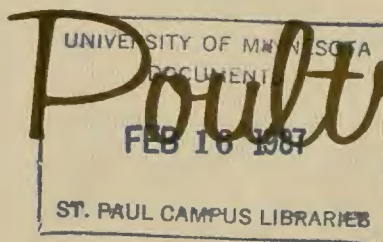




AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



Poultry Patter

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ITEMS OF INTEREST TO MINNESOTA'S EGG INDUSTRY

Melvin L. Hamre, Associate Professor and Extension Poultry Specialist

This is the tenth anniversary of Poultry Patter, a newsletter prepared by poultry extension specialists and staff of the Animal Science department at the University of Minnesota who are involved in poultry research.

It aims to provide you with practical information on various segments of the egg industry in Minnesota. Past issues show a fairly broad coverage of almost all aspects of poultry management, egg production, and marketing.

Most of the coverage has been an indepth exploration of a single topic per issue. We will be trying a new format in the future with some issues devoted to shorter items of timely concern and announcements of interest. We invite suggestions from you, the users and readers of Poultry Patter.

—Melvin L. Hamre, Editor.



MIDWEST POULTRY FEDERATION

During the summer heat it is difficult to turn thoughts to midwinter meetings. But Upper Midwest area poultrymen might circle February 8, 9, and 10, 1973, dates of the second annual Midwest Poultry Federation Convention at the Minneapolis auditorium. The federation board of directors recently met to set dates and begin planning for the 1973 convention.

Many egg industry members attended the first Midwest Poultry Federation Convention last February at the Hotel Leamington. Mark your calendar now and plan to attend the educational sessions, business meetings, exhibits, and social events together with other midwest poultrymen.

EGG MARKETING SEMINAR

Plans are underway for the fourth annual Minnesota-Iowa Egg Marketing Seminar at Kahler's Inn Towne Motel, Albert Lea, Minnesota, October 19-20, 1972. Topics of interest to industry members involved in egg handling, cartoning, processing, and marketing will be included. There will be progress reports on compliance with the Egg Products Inspection Act; or how the Occupational Safety and Health Act affects egg handlers; and on reducing egg breakage. The programs begin Thursday evening and conclude midafternoon Friday. Complete program details and registration information will be available shortly and sent to participants in past seminars. If you have not attended in previous years and are in this phase of the egg business, write for further details. Join the other members of your industry in these presentations and discussions.

HOW MANY BIRDS TO A CAGE?

This is a question frequently asked by poultry producers. There has been a tendency to increase bird density to the point where overall production suffers. Generally as the number of chickens in a cage increases, egg production decreases and the mortality rate increases. Bird density can lead to more cannibalism and other social stresses that increase mortality and reduce rate of lay. When egg prices to the farmer are high, the greater income from the increased production may more than offset decreases in efficiency. But when egg prices are at or near production cost, the lower efficiency with higher caged densities may result in less net income to the producer.

The belief that birds must be crowded to gain labor efficiency and reduce per bird housing and equipment costs makes it hard to see that these gains can be outstripped by production decreases and mortality losses. A series of on-the-farm experiments conducted in Southern California over a period of years is summarized in a recent publication, AXT-n48, of the University of California Agricultural Extension Service.

In an experiment with 10-by 16-inch cages the income over feed and pullet cost was greatest using 2 birds per cage when egg price was 25 cents per dozen. At a 30 cent per dozen price, 3 birds per cage was the most profitable for this cage size. All four of the experiments that included 3 and 4 hens per 12-inch cage showed that 4 hens per cage is unprofitable at both 25- and 30-cent per dozen egg prices. In 18-by 24-inch cages, income was the greatest from 5 birds when comparing 5, 6, and 7 birds in this size cage.

These trials show that producers who adjust cage density in relation to estimated price levels can manage their flocks for maximum profits. (See table top of next page.) Producers may be interested in obtaining a copy of the publication for a better display of the trials.

INDUSTRY PLANNING FOR JANUARY—JUNE 1973

The following summary and recommendation is taken from USDA's Egg Marketing Guide for the first six months of 1973. The guide aids the industry in planning egg output so that production is related to expected demand and will result in reasonable prices to producers and consumers. Individual firms are free to decide how they will respond to the following recommendations:

The economy is expected to continue to improve through the first half of 1973. Rising incomes and rising employment should help increase the demand for food. Increased purchasing power and a growing population will help maintain the demand for eggs. Supplies of eggs coming to market will continue to be the dominant factor in determining egg prices.

In order to avoid the depressed egg prices experienced in the first half of 1972, it is recommended that the flock size at the beginning of 1973 be cut to 2 percent below the previous year's levels, and production in the first half of 1973 be reduced



ESTIMATED INCOME OVER FEED AND PULLET COSTS/1,000 CAGES

Experiment	Cage size (inches)	Birds per cage		
		2	3	4
At 25 cents per dozen				
		\$	\$	\$
1	12 x 18	740	1,032	
2	12 x 18		-401	-1,451
3	10 x 16	845	496	
4	12 x 18	1,743	1,523	349
6	12 x 18		908	-888
7	12 x 16	1,131	869	-509
At 30 cents per dozen				
1	12 x 18	2,554	3,709	
2	12 x 18		2,161	1,646
3	10 x 16	2,856	3,244	
4	12 x 18	3,954	4,522	3,764
6	12 x 18	3,178	3,838	2,376
7	12 x 16		3,649	2,700

2 percent below output in the first half of 1972. Output at this level would be expected to result in substantially improved prices above the depressed level of 1972.

The size of the laying flock needed to meet the recommended level of egg production depends on its level of performance. A laying flock 2 percent smaller than a year earlier, with a comparable rate of lay, would meet the recommended goal. However, if further improvements in efficiency are ob-

tained through the use of Marek's vaccine, and continued genetic, nutrition, and management improvements, then a further reduction in flock size to offset these gains would be necessary.

Considering the increased production of competing red meats, rising cost of production, and a lagging demand for eggs, it is recommended that the number of replacement pullet chicks started in the first half of 1973 be held to a number that, when added to the laying flock, would result in a flock size 1 percent below the previous year's levels.

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Roland H. Abraham, Director

Cooperative Agricultural Extension Work
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