



Poultry Patter

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MORE POULTRY CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

Melvin L. Hamre, Professor and Extension Poultry Specialist

Poultry Patter continues reviews of some of the workshop talks given at the recent Midwest Poultry Federation Convention.

Tim Cain, production manager of Yoder, Inc., of Iowa, recommended a task force approach to solving egg production problems, saying you can approach a problem, do nothing and let someone else make the decision, decide yourself, or use a task force approach. In the latter approach all levels of management might be involved in a consultant or analytic role to solve a complex production problem. He stressed the emphasis on people in production problem solving.



Pullet Growing

The basics of a good started rather than a stunted pullet were presented by Charles Howe of the Hyline organization. He said a modern egg production chick has a lot of genetic potential but no genetic guarantee. The management of the bird from chick to the end of the laying cycle determines whether the genetic potential is realized. The management and disease control history during the growing period is one of the determining factors of the actual egg production record of the hen. When good husbandry methods are used, reasonable production results are usually obtained. Production usually suffers when one uses poor methods, cuts corners, or just tries to get by.

In started pullet production the making of a production flock may very well start at the moment chicks are put down in the brooder house. There is no time for last minute cleaning and preparation. The best way to give the chick a good start is to have the brooder house ready. Whether on litter or wire, the area should be warm and comfortable. Both water availability and watering space are important to prevent dehydration. Some growers have found it helpful to add corn syrup, molasses, or electrolytes to the first drinking water to get chicks off to a good start. Triggering the water cups a few times at the start for birds on wire can encourage chicks to find the water and prevent dehydration. Paper on the floor of cages must reach to the water and feed area since birds may hesitate to leave the paper during the first few days and as a result do not eat and drink. Howe recommended the use of steel-cut corn as a part of the first feeding since it is attractive to the chick, easy to pick up, and may help prevent vent pasting.

He stressed the importance of monitoring the progress of the flock. A sample of birds should be weighed periodically at least from the twelfth week on and body weights compared to

breeder standards. Attention must be paid to meeting the nutrient needs of the birds during the growing period. While the economics of feeding must be considered, it is false economy to fail to meet the protein and other nutrient needs of the growing bird. The pullet grower must be alert to many influences that might retard growth or result in lowering the pullets' performance. Water sanitation is important: mold can influence performance. A periodic treatment with copper sulfate might be considered as part of an antimycotic program. Some signs of coccidiosis in floor birds may show after a stress due to low feed consumption even if there is a coccidiostat in the feed. Both internal and external parasites can be a problem with any flock. Be alert for signs of their presence. The addition of electrolytes to the drinking water 3 days before moving to the laying house may be helpful in combating the stress of move. Importance of following a proper lighting program during the growing period was also emphasized for proper development of the bird and appropriate response to the lighting program during the laying period.

An overview of vaccination programs for pullets was presented by R. W. Winterfield, Purdue University. An ideal program should be tailored to the management and housing conditions of the birds and be capable of meeting the disease challenges of the area. Vaccination for Marek's disease, Newcastle disease, and infectious bronchitis are common in most areas. Fowl pox and infectious laryngotracheitis vaccination are not needed in many production areas unless disease outbreaks have occurred recently. Many pullet flocks are also vaccinated for avian encephalomyelitis. Birds may be more susceptible to this disease if raised on wire and in isolation.

He pointed out the diagnostic problem in determining causes of flock infections that cause 5-10 percent drops in egg production. It may be difficult to isolate the causative agent of the disease. By the time production drops occur and the veterinarian is called in to look at the problem, the cause may no longer be present and the birds are recovering. In diseases such as infectious bronchitis, because there are a number of strains, infection may occur even though the birds have been vaccinated. The ideal vaccine should provide a mild reaction, broad spectrum of protection, and long term protection. We don't have ideal vaccines for all diseases and they may vary in virulence and in antigenic coverage. The importance of temperature, humidity, ventilation, and air movement to effective vaccination were also pointed out.

Proper debeaking of pullets can have a major influence on the effective performance of the bird during the laying period. Oscar Nygard of the Lakeview Hatchery in South Dakota explained their bird debeaking procedures and practices at 7 days of age. He stressed proper positioning of the birds and adjustment of debeaker temperature control.

Marketing

Dan Gardner of the Milton G. Waldbaum Company talked about his company's methods of working with retailers to increase sales about 50 percent. He emphasized the importance of working with the clerks who actually stock the dairy case. It is important to check code dates to make sure inventory is properly rotated. In some stores carts were provided to make it easier for clerks to keep the dairy case better stocked without having to carry egg cases. Baskets may make it more difficult to rotate the egg supply, but the retailer may like them better because they stack more easily.

Many commodity groups place in-store advertising so retailers frequently expect the egg supplier to put up as well as furnish promotional material. His company has supported other tie-in campaigns with egg promotion as well as featuring commercials in some stores that have programmed music systems. The key to success is proving to the retailer this will improve business. Too much emphasis has been placed on only giving a cheaper price, says Gardner. The egg supplier must realize that eggs are only one of thousands of products in the store. Eggs can't command much of the retailers' attention. Gardner's firm has provided a person weekly to larger stores to check on the egg display. If eggs are not properly stocked according to the standards of the retailer and the supplier a notation is made for the store manager. It has resulted in tremendous improvements.

A review of some egg merchandising studies was presented by Mel Hamre. While the importance of the egg and its value is apparent to members of the egg industry, eggs are only two to six items (grades or sizes) out of some 8,000 to 12,000 items in the supermarket. The retailers' objective is to sell a total product mix to maximize overall sales and profit and they are not in business to specifically sell eggs. Studies show the important contribution eggs make to total supermarket sales and profits. There is potential for greater consumption and profit

through merchandising techniques. Eggs are one of the strongest demand product categories within the entire supermarket and bring the greatest profit and sales per foot of display space in the dairy department.

Merchandising studies have shown that eggs can be used to increase dairy department sales and profits. Eggs often need additional display space to increase sales, reduce stockouts, and lower labor costs. Balanced merchandising programs for dairy departments have increased egg sales 10-30 percent. The egg industry has a tremendous marketing challenge and story to tell. It must be interpreted to supermarket customers through improved merchandising to halt the decline in egg consumption.

Waste Utilization

Joe Vandepopuliere from the University of Missouri discussed the potential in utilizing hatchery wastes. Larger hatcheries, high disposal costs, increased feed prices, and greater pressures on reducing pollution make the possibility of processing poultry hatchery waste more realistic. Sites for disposal by dumping or spreading are not as readily available in many areas and problems with odors, insects, and unsightly conditions are frequent. Landfill disposal is getting more expensive and may no longer exist.

Processing equipment has not been designed specifically for handling hatchery waste. A poultry hatchery by-product meal to be used as an animal product feedstuff can be prepared from the mixture of egg shells, infertile and unhatched eggs, and culled chicks. The waste requires cooking, drying, and grinding. The chemical composition of the by-product meal will vary with the hatchery operating procedures. Improved hatchability will decrease the protein level and increase the calcium content of hatchery by-product meal. The basic research demonstrated so far indicates that hatchery by-product meal becomes efficient poultry feed when formulated into the ration. The raw product must be handled and processed to prevent decomposition and to produce a quality feedstuff at the lowest possible cost.

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