



Poultry Patter

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PRODUCING CLEAN EGGS

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The time is rapidly approaching when only top-quality products can be placed on the market. In fact, most supermarkets at the present time sell only Grade AA and Grade A eggs. Eggs of these grades must have shells that are free from foreign material and stains and discolorations that are readily visible. Consumers expect the eggs they buy to be as clean and wholesome as any other food product.

Through good management practices on the farm, most eggs can be produced with clean shells. Those that become dirty must be cleaned before they reach the consumer. Eggs can be cleaned on the farm by the producer or farther along in the marketing channel by larger in-plant cleaning facilities.

It is not possible by normal procedures to completely clean an egg that is badly soiled or stained without removing a large portion of the shell. Soiled eggs will still have stains that resist removal from the shell surface and dirt that cannot be readily removed from the pores. These eggs will be downgraded because of their appearance, since only clean eggs can be placed in AA and A grades.

The specifications for shell cleanliness are outlined in the USDA egg grading regulations. Eggs with some areas of slight stains can be placed in grade B. Slight stains covering less than one-thirty-second of the shell surface if localized or one-sixteenth of the surface if scattered are permitted. Eggs with slight stains covering more than one-sixteenth of the shell and moderate stains covering less than one-fourth of the shell can be placed in grade C. Eggs not meeting these requirements are classed as dirty.

Economic Losses

While the economic loss resulting from the downgrading of eggs that cannot be satisfactorily cleaned is only a few cents a dozen, the total loss to the producer is quite sizable. Let's examine some egg price data and see how costly the dirty egg problem can be.

The average price per dozen paid to producers at the farm level (Iowa at farm prices reported by USDA) has been as follows:

Year	Grade A Incentive	Grade A	Grade B	Grade C and dirties
1965	31.08¢	26.13¢	19.21¢	13.65¢
1964	30.66	26.78	20.83	16.50
1963	31.56	28.39	22.18	17.09
Average	31.10	27.10	20.74	15.75

The following per dozen price spread between grades is calculated from the average prices above:

Year	Incentive A to B	From A to B	Incentive A to C	From A to C
1965	11.87¢	6.92¢	17.43¢	12.48¢
1964	9.83	5.95	14.16	10.28
1963	9.38	6.21	14.47	11.30
Average	10.36	6.36	15.35	11.35

Using the averages from the above information, let's see what dirty eggs can cost a producer with 5,000 hens, each averaging 18 dozen marketable eggs per year:

Loss due to dirty eggs:	1 hen	5,000 hens
Incentive program, 5% B grades	9.3¢	\$465
Incentive program, 10% B grades	18.6	930
Straight grading, 5% B grades	5.7	285
Straight grading, 10% B grades	11.4	570

So it's plain to see that dirty eggs can mean a sizable reduction in potential income. Incentive payment programs for quality and volume are based on high-quality eggs, so considerable reduction in income can result if there are many undergrades. Even greater losses can be experienced if many eggs are downgraded to the C category.

Producing Clean Eggs From Caged Layers

Obtaining a high percentage of clean eggs from caged layers should not be difficult if cage layout has been designed properly and good management practices are followed. The producer should pay particular attention to the following points:

1. The house must be properly insulated and ventilated so that the facilities can be kept dry.



2. Routine maintenance must be performed on cages to correct any sagging of cages or bent wires so that eggs roll into the egg trough.

3. Eggs must be gathered frequently to prevent breakage and soiling.

4. Wires must be kept as clean as possible. Some poultrymen routinely brush the wires of the egg trough to reduce the number of eggs with wire marks.

Producing Nest-Clean Eggs

Good laying house management will minimize egg cleaning problems. Eggs that do need cleaning should be only lightly soiled. The following practices will help reduce the number of dirty eggs:

1. Confine the laying flock to the house at all times.

2. Keep the litter dry and in good condition. This requires an insulated house with good ventilation under today's high density management systems. Place waterers over screened platforms or dropping pits to ease litter management.

3. Provide an adequate number of nests with sufficient clean nesting material. One nest should be provided for each four to five birds. Brush wire bottoms of roll-away nests frequently to reduce wire marking. If birds are not using some nests try to find out why and make these nests more desirable. Discourage birds from roosting in nests at night.

4. Gather eggs frequently to reduce the number of broken eggs and minimize cleaning problems.

SEPTEMBER POULTRY MEETINGS

Area poultry meetings are scheduled from 1:30 to 3:30 p. m. as follows:

- 19, Owatonna, VFW Hall
- 20, New Ulm, Bud's Melodeer Club
- 21, Slayton, Club Royal
- 22, Perham, Community Hall
- 23, Litchfield, Community Building

Speakers from the University of Minnesota include Drs. B. S. Pomeroy, College of Veterinary Medicine; D. C. Snetsinger, poultry nutritionist, Department of Animal Science; and R. W. Berg and M. L. Hamre, Extension poultry specialists.

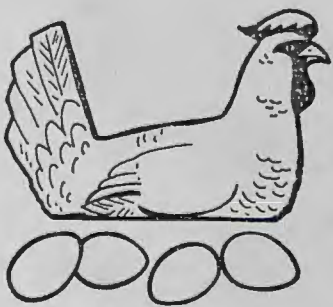
Main topics of discussion will be "Gearing Your Ration to Layer Performance," "Chronic Respiratory Disease," "Layer Management," and "Current Trends in the Egg Industry." There will be a question-and-answer period followed by free coffee at the end of each meeting.

IMPORTANT NOTICE!

This is the last issue of Poultry Patter you will receive unless you returned the card that was enclosed with the July issue. If this card has been lost and you wish to remain on the mailing list, send a post card with your name and address (be sure to include zip code) to:

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