

Discussion:

Today most Poultry Farmers use intensive and controlled systems to supply us with low priced chickens and eggs.

In an Intensive Poultry Unit, everything is controlled and automated. Large Units of birds are in cages, at a constant temperature, with a nutritionally balanced diet, and fresh water supply. Eggs are automatically collected. Effluent is removed automatically so that the chickens are never dirty.

Animal Liberationists describe these methods as cruel and unnecessary. What do you think?

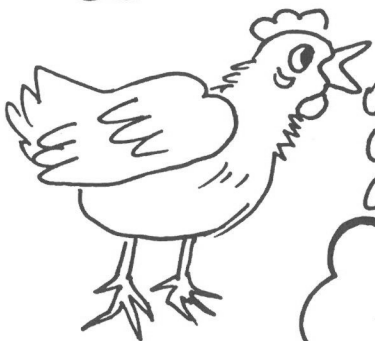


Ace reporter Ronnie Rabbit recently visited Peter's Poultry Farm to get an "in depth" view on this controversial issue. There he talked exclusively to Farmer Peter and Henrietta Hen. What questions do you think he asked? How was he answered?...

Think of the questions that Ronnie Rabbit might have asked and write them below. Write the farmer's and the hen's answers in the 'talk bubbles' provided.



R. Rabbit "



R. Rabbit "

What are YOUR feelings on this issue? Write them below:

OLD MACDONALS'S FARMS - NOTES ON:

INTENSIVE POULTRY FARMING

Information on the subject from the PRODUCTION point of view:

WHY?

for ECONOMICAL reasons * It is the best use of resources i.e. space, labour, feed (use of grain crops).
* To produce quality, low cost, high protein foods.

HOW?

by AUTOMATION for * Incubation
* Housing
* Ventilation
* Water Supply (drinkers)
* Feed Supply (feeder)

AUTOMATION FOR COMMERCIAL POULTRY: (i.e. eggs for breakfast table and chicken meat for human consumption):

- * Automatic Egg Collection
- * Automatic Effluent Disposal
- * Automatic Meat Bird Pickup
- * Automatic Environmental Temperature Control (approx. 70 degrees F)

AUTOMATION for PROCESSING:

- * By-products e.g. chicken loaf, dog food, fertilizer, cattle food, etc.

INCUBATION: Both types of poultry are hatched at commercial hatcheries, utilizing separate hatchers/setters.

1. Eggs are set, fumigated against mycoplasma gallisepticum.
2. Eggs are put into setters at 103 degrees F, and 90% humidity for 18 days.
3. Eggs are taken out and candled, clears removed (and recycled).
4. Remainder put into hatchers for 3 days.
5. Hatched at 21 days.
6. For commercial use, there are two types of day old chickens. The meat strain - are used as hatched, are vaccinated for infectious bronchitis and debeaked. The commercial egg laying strain are sexed, males disposed of and females debeaked.

BROILER PRODUCTION - I.E. MEAT PRODUCING CHICKENS

HOUSING:

All shedding provides a controlled environment i.e. insulated with controlled airflow at 1 cubic foot per pound of meat. Air movement is provided by extractor fans in the walls, moving 5000 cubic feet per minute. Air inlets in the ridge are at 5 square feet per 1000 cubic feet per minute. These requirements are minimum and if not met, stock will suffer with respiratory problems.

STOCKING RATE:

Birds are stocked at 0.50 square foot per bird (at market age). The shed is approximately 60 feet wide and 300 feet long. Birds have full use of the floor area after brooding.

EQUIPMENT:

Temperature under brooders at one day old is 95 degrees F.
Litter material is from wood shavings.
Feed supplied automatically.
Water supplied automatically.
Feed delivered and blown into 10 tonne bulk bins under pressure.

FEED:

Feed is nutritionally balanced and supplied in three forms:
1-3 week old chicks are given starter crumb (high medication and protein).
3-5 weeks - starter crumb.
5 weeks to market age - finisher pellet (fats sprayed on).

MANAGEMENT:

Birds require constant temperature, fresh environment, clean water, dry litter and fresh feed. The manager is required to graph water consumption, food consumption, mortality rate and a temperature on a daily basis.
Broiler birds are grown on a contract basis.

MARKETING:

Birds are picked up automatically (by machine).
Birds are taken to abattoir and processed. They are graded/portioned and packed. All residue is ground and recycled. A chicken loses approximately 30% of its body weight in processing.

PERFORMANCE:

This strain is bred for high weight gain and efficient feed conversion.
The average weight of the broiler bird is 2kg with a conversion rate of 1.4 - 1.72kg per kg.
The mortality rate is 2% - 6%.

COMMERCIAL LAYERS - I.E. EGG PRODUCING CHICKENS

HOUSING:

Modern shedding is a normally controlled environment, but is not heated because the birds are uniformly distributed throughout the shed. Birds are housed in tiered cages, at approximately 6-12 thousand per shed. They enter the cages at approximately 17 weeks, which is the point of lay.

FEED:

Feed is supplied automatically from bulk bins and is run mechanically along 3 tiered cages.

WATER:

Water is supplied either by nipples or drinker cups.

VENTILATION:

Ventilation is fan assisted and includes misters for evaporated cooling effect in summer.

EGG COLLECTION:

Egg collection is mechanical and automatic. Cage floors slope allowing eggs to roll on to a conveyor belt, which conveys the eggs the length of the unit to a central packing area.

EFFLUENT DISPOSAL:

Effluent is a valuable fertilizer and is sprayed directly onto grass land or is dried and packaged and sold to nurseries and gardeners.

THE LAYER:

The bird itself is bred to be very light, approximately 1-1.25 kg in weight. It consumes approximately 40zs of feed per day. It lays approximately 280 eggs per year. Production life span is approximately 18 months. When processed at the end of lay, carcasses have little or no meat value and are used mainly for grinding into other by-products such as, animal food, etc.

MARKETING:

Eggs are marketed in Queensland through Sunny Queen Egg Farms (The Egg Marketing Board) and farmers can only produce under a quota system, which is reviewed regularly.