

Hatchery's

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to our question about the background of the average pullet raiser. Most of them are in the 30-40 year age group, and were not basically poultrymen before they entered the started pullet business. They are capable people, often outstanding in their communities, they learn quickly, and they follow directions right to the letter. The better operators are often the ones having the largest investment and deriving the greatest amount of their income from pullet raising. In many of the smaller operations (6-10,000 birds) the wife takes care of the birds and the man works off the farm. Women are tough to beat when it comes to raising good pullets Markey has found.

Most of the birds raised in the area are sold within a 50-75 mile radius of the Lancaster-York territory. Many are ordered a year or more in advance, Markey said.

According to Markey, DeKalb started raising pullets in environment-controlled buildings under long-term grower

contracts, as an attempt to supply the demand of the large buyers of started pullets for more uniform birds in large quantities. He felt the program to-date had been very successful in attaining those objectives.

When asked to what he would attribute that success, Markey said company integrity, sanitation, and isolation. The program calls for strict sanitation and isolation. After each flock goes out the building and equipment are washed and disinfected. After new litter is added and everything in readiness for the next flock, the building and its contents are thoroughly fumigated.

No one is allowed access to the birds during the first 17 weeks except Markey and the grower. After 17 weeks of age, the buyer of the pullets is permitted to examine the birds and study their records. At any time prior to accepting delivery the buyer may reject any particular lot of pullets.

Markey estimated that perhaps 80-90 per cent of the birds grown by his company

in the area are destined for cage houses.

After this preview of the program, we visited one of the larger growers, Dick Sauder, New Holland R1.

Sauder has one house that holds 14,500 pullets, and a recently-completed one with a capacity of 17,000. Both houses were in operation, and the difference in ages of all the chicks on the farm was about one week. Sauder told us that his livability was excellent on both flocks; one was just under 1 per cent and the other was just over that.

Sauder allows one and one-third square feet of floor space for each bird, and he felt this had worked out real well. He has one unique feature associated with his air-intake slots on the new building. It is an adjustable baffle board system designed by Joe Claybaugh, Poultry Consultant with DeKalb in Illinois. The boards are each about 10 inches wide by four feet long. They are set up in series running the length of

the building, and are operated by one central winch. In winter they can be closed entirely, or cracked open an inch or so. But in summer, they can be opened completely.

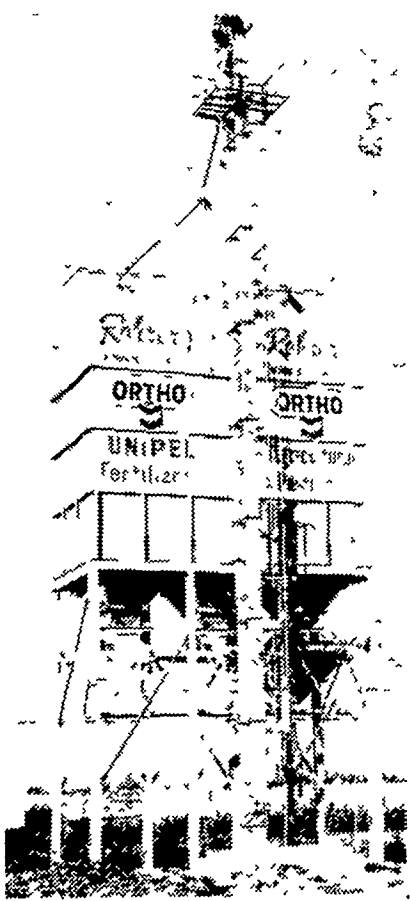
The trick is a nail in either side of each panel that is set off-center. When the baffle board is opened to a certain point, the nail catches in two Z-shaped wires either side of the board. The unequal distribution of board weight caused by the nails being off-center, allows the board to flip over and lie flat down against the wall. This permits maximum slot opening for summertime ventilation.

In the time it took to describe this operation it could have been completed several times. As our poultry industry moves toward larger, more specialized, and more automated laying flocks the demand for good pullets skillfully grown under such controlled environment conditions seems almost inevitable. Without that supply of pullets, the large laying operations, as we know them, would be practically impossible. Hatcheries realize this and they are moving swiftly to meet this demand.

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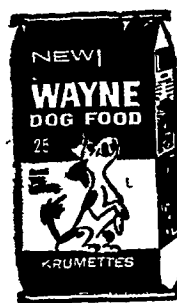
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