

EGG PROCESSING at I. R. Musser Poultry Farm, Inc. proceeds at the rate of 800-1000 cases per week. Employees are shown here handling eggs as they come off the 24-case per hour Seymour grader-packer in dozen cartons and on filler flats.

L. F. Photo

**• Musser Poultry**

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 storage room — at \$3 per bird  
 The birds are housed in what is, in effect, one large cage measuring 38x174 feet. Eggs are gathered from the rear of three-tiered, roll-out nests located along both sides of the pen. In collecting the eggs, the operator pushes a lightweight plywood cart along a three-foot wide platform located outside the cage.

The floor of the pen is constructed in such a way—slope plus 1x2, 12 1/2-gauge, welded wire with the cross pieces on the underside—that any floor eggs roll to the outside and are collected on a special tray below the nests.

**POLE TYPE**

The building is a pole type with six-inch, pressure creosoted poles spaced every 10 feet through the center of the building. The "cage" itself is, in effect, hung on these poles.

The roof is supported by 2x6's spaced 24 inches on centers, and spiked into the ridge-pole. The floor is similarly supported, except that the joists are spaced 16 inches on centers.

**DEEP PIT**

Manure from the 8500-bird flock at Musser's is collected directly in a deep pit under the building. The pit, which runs the full length of the roosting area, is eight feet below the floor level at the center and six feet deep at the outer edge.

Musser figures the pit will have sufficient capacity to store manure for the entire 15-month laying cycle without cleaning. However, it is readily accessible through two, 12-foot outside doors, should any problems arise, the manure could be removed while the birds were still in the house, Musser notes. He plans to spread the manure on his corn land.

**SKYLIGHTS**

Another Musser innovation is the skylights in the galvanized steel roof. These are 2x10-foot fiberglass panels spaced every 24 feet either side of the peak.

In adding these panels, Musser figured he'd keep the natural factor of sunlight in his operation. He felt this would be particularly important during the winter, but realized he'd have to baffle that heat source somehow during the summer. He has prepared for

ing the skylights from the outside with sheets of galvanized steel roofing, raised six inches to keep out the direct light; made panels of black plastic which can be inserted into the skylights from inside the building if necessary. These will permit complete light control in case he decides later to operate the building under conditions of controlled environment.

**HIGH PRODUCTION**

The first flock in this new building were housed February 1st. "Since April 7th they



WITH THE PLATFORM REMOVED from inside, this 12-foot door is one of two such openings to the deep manure pit that runs the full length of the new slant-floor laying house at Musser's. Here, Miller & Bushong poultry serviceman Jack Renshaw, left, and farm worker James Kolp observe the actions of the birds from below.

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SHOWN WITH REFRIGERATED trucks in which they deliver butter, eggs, and cheese for I. R. Musser Poultry Farm are drivers John Miller, John Wenger, and Wilbur Heisey.

L. F. Photo

have never produced less than 88 percent (hen-day basis), and have laid as high as 93 percent on at least one occasion," Musser states.

His mortality has averaged 1 1/2 percent per month to date, he notes, adding that cannibalism during the early days of production was the chief cause of death. After reducing the amount of direct light entering the building, this was brought under control.

Musser noted that one reason he chose this house was because of its reputation for maintaining high-producing birds. He added that, being located in a relatively built-up area, he will have to be able to control his odor and fly problems. He feels this will be accomplished more readily with this building than with a caged layer house.

Musser has found that many poultrymen in the area have been interested in looking the house over, and several plan to build similar structures as a result. But, being concerned

that any unnecessary disease problems should hit this high-producing flock, he has restricted visitors' entry to the house.

**FEED PROGRAM**

Corn from Musser's 50 acres is processed through his own grain dryer which has a capacity of 2000 bushels in 24 hours. From there it goes to a 6000-bushel storage bin to be augered to one of his four 15-20 ton overhead bins, as needed. His own production is later supplemented with purchased corn. He also buys 40-pound oats in bulk, adding them to his feed mix at the rate of 200 pounds per ton. (Musser feels the addition of oats was important in helping him control his recent cannibalism problem.)

A concentrate of cage-layer quality is prepared for him by a local feed manufacturer. "The concentrate is designed for optimum performance in our feeding program," Musser explains. "When production drops to 75 percent," he adds,

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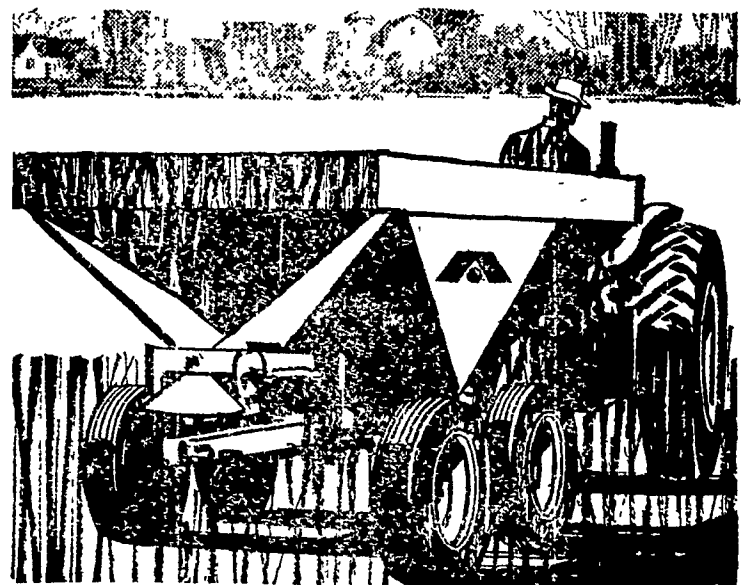
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