

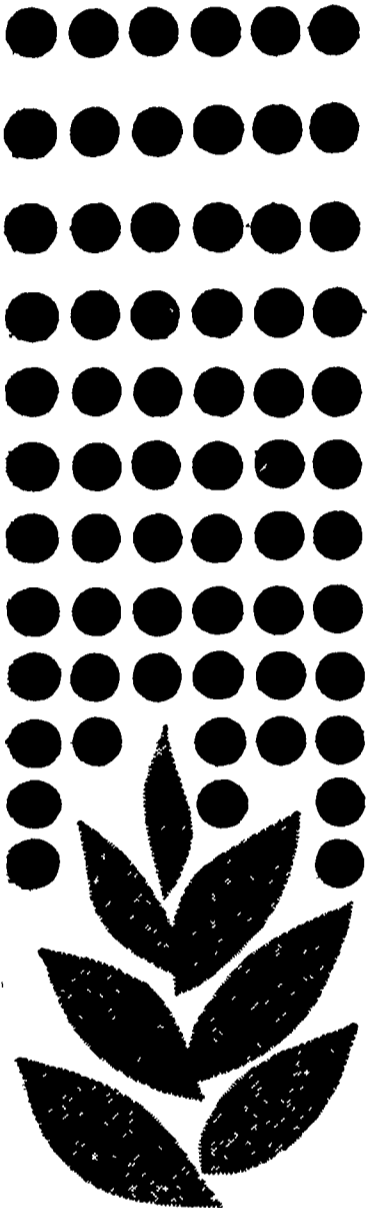
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Older Hens Pose Quality Egg Production Problems

Will it be more difficult for marketing firms to obtain top quality eggs this summer and fall than a year earlier? The same conditions which add to egg breakage problems — more hens being kept in production for longer laying periods. Through June 5 this year, 10 percent fewer light-type hens have been slaughtered under Federal inspection as compared to the same period a year earlier. For the week ending June 5, 1967, less than half as many hens were slaughtered as the same week a year earlier.

The same egg handling and quality maintenance program which adequately yielded Grade A eggs from hens in production less than a year may not be satisfactory for yielding as many Grade A eggs from older hens according to Kermit Birth, Penn State Marketing Specialist. Thus producers who are keeping hens in production for longer than normal laying periods may have to change quality control practices to get the same yield of top quality eggs as when the hens were under a year of age. Even then, it may not be possible to maintain the

same percent of Grade A eggs as when the hens were younger. Lower proportions of Grade A eggs will be attributed to both exterior and interior quality. Exterior quality will be affected by number of stained and dirty shells. Weak shells and excessive numbers of extra large and jumbo eggs may cause more shell damage and leakers. In addition, more eggs may have rough shells or other shell conditions requiring eggs to be categorized as Grade B.

In a study conducted at Cornell University, pullet and hen flocks were compared. It was reported that by the sixth month of production after the molt, the percent of excellent shells had dropped from 82 to 35 percent as compared to a drop from 82 to 53 percent in a comparable 6 months during the pullet year. Also the number of weak-shelled eggs in the sixth month of the hen year had doubled from the number shown in the tenth month of the pullet year. Findings also reported that both shell quality and albumen condition showed a gradual decline during the pullet year of production and became serious problems in the

thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth months of continuous production.

Interior quality was lower for eggs laid in the hen year than in the pullet year. The quality of eggs laid for 2 months after a forced molt was comparable with that of the seventh month of the pullet year. But, the decline in the second year appeared to be more rapid than in the pullet or first year. Proportionally Grade A eggs increased and Grade AA eggs subsequently decreased in the hen year as compared to the pullet year. Lower quality eggs when laid require added care in handling and maintaining quality until they reach the consumer because there is less allowance for quality decline.

Lowered egg quality results in a lower weighted average price per dozen which producers receive for all eggs marketed. It can also add to marketing costs. In processing it results in reduced output of Grade A eggs packed per hour thus increasing labor and overhead costs per dozen. Also, poorer quality may result in more quality variation within cartons of

eggs causing more difficulty in holding markets.

The extent of the quality problem is unknown. As prices of large eggs increase seasonally and producers who are unable to purchase pullets keep layers in production for longer than normal laying periods, the problem may increase in intensity. Even though there may be only a 5 to 10 percent increase in the proportion of hens in the nation's laying flock this summer and fall, these proportions may vary among areas and the problem associated with quality and breakage may be more severe in some areas than in others.

What will happen at the retail end since producers are adding to their quality problems when striving for more eggs by keeping over older hens? Will consumers accept lower qualities or will they consume fewer eggs? At a time when the industry wants to increase consumption, gambling with quality may be a poor policy.

● Farm Calendar

(Continued from Page 1)
complete schedule on Page 6)

Wednesday, August 28

9:00 a.m.—FFA District Dairy Show, Harrisburg.

Thursday, August 29

8:30 a.m.—District Black and White Show, Harrisburg.

Friday, August 30

9:00 a.m.—4-H District Dairy Show, Harrisburg.

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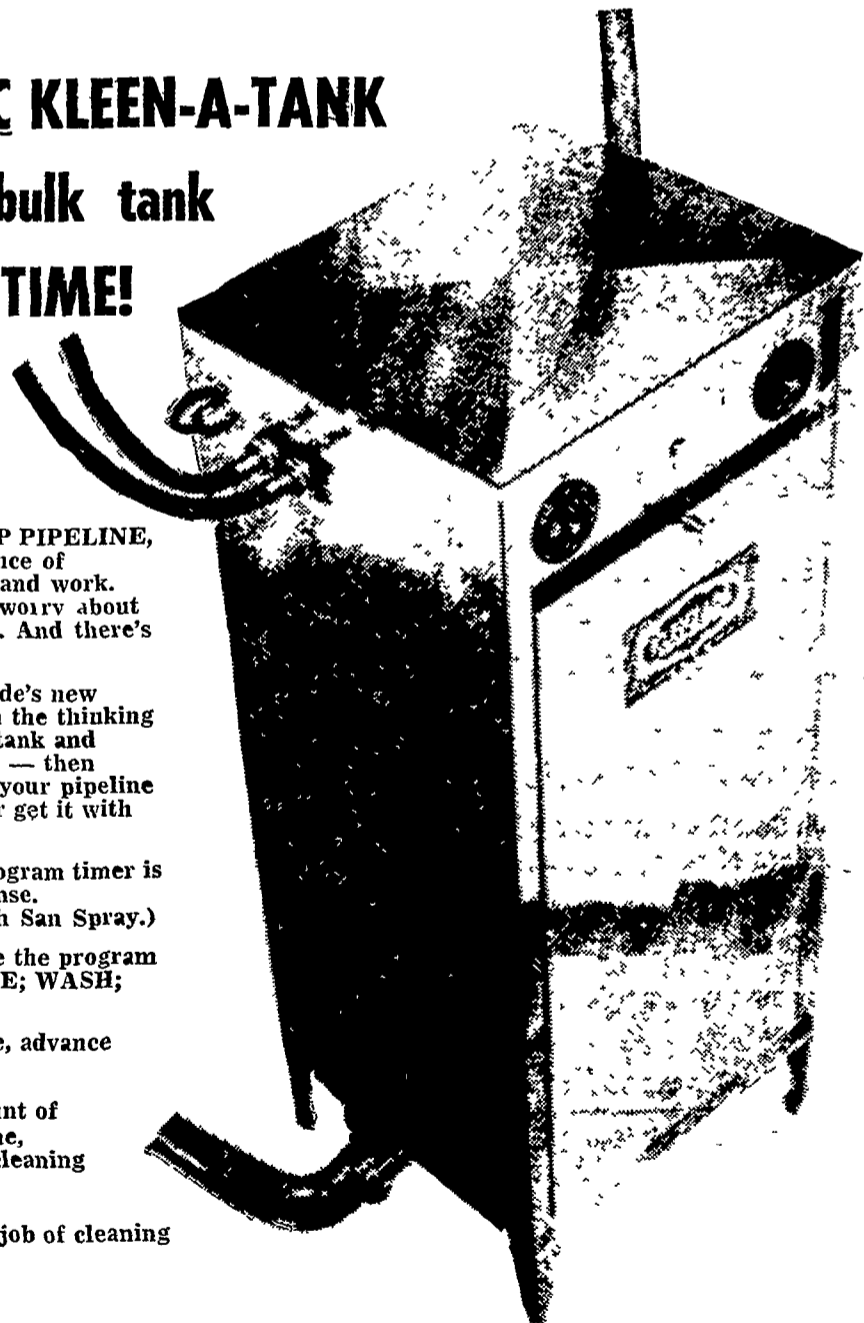
Set the Selector Switch for BULK TANK. When program timer is advanced, the unit will automatically wash and rinse. (Pre-rinse by hauler, prior to milking sanitize with San Spray.)

Set the selector switch on PIPELINE. Then activate the program timer dial — for automatic TEMPERED PRE-RINSE; WASH; ACID RINSE.

Just prior to milking, set selector switch on sanitize, advance timer dial and sanitizing procedures are automatic.

The Unit automatically dispenses the correct amount of chemical and provides the best combination of time, temperature, concentration, and volume for ideal cleaning action — without work or worry on your part.

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