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## **Robert K. Rohrer**

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## Egg Shell Damage

Penn State Marketing

a sizable economic loss to indi- when the eggs are removed vidual producers and market from the carton. mention the difficulty of re- between profit and loss moving eggs from the carton.

means the egg shell is broken, tinued surveillance of egg hand, shells,

among producers. It is not un-removed due to damaged shells eggs with weak shells; however, common when candling eggs to and have to be marketed as not all damage is confined to present a loss of markets. Com- eggs. One-cent per dozen dif- one study, it was pointed out crease the quantity and plaints from consumers often ference may mean the margin that incidence of shell damage tion of damaged shells.

This means keeping

increased as the age of layers There is no magic remedy for increased. At 38 weeks of age, Right or wrong, the consumer reducing egg shell damage. The 1.2 percent of the eggs had dambelieves sticking to the carton problem requires attention to aged shells, while at 78 weeks of

Even though the shell is not ling from the hen to the con-

many details. It involves con- lay, 4.3 percent had damaged

As the mechanical handling broken when the eggs are pur-sumer. There is no single fac. of eggs from hen to consumer Damaged egg shells represent chased, breakage may occur tor which can be blamed as the increases, added precautions chief cause of egg shell damage. must be taken to keep shell True, the incidence of egg shell damage at a minimum. With ing firms. The severity varies If 5 percent of the eggs are damage may be greater among mechanical handling, eggs are usually subject to more stresses, including bumping, than with pick out 5 to 10 percent of the cracked eggs, the blend price to eggs with weak shells. Another proper hand operations. This eggs having damaged shells, the producer could be reduced consideration is that shell dam, will vary among systems. The Some may even be a total loss, as much as one cent per dozen age increases with the age of same is true with processing. As we mechanize, there is addition-These conditions represent not at a time when there is a 20 cent the flock. This may be related only a reduced return for eggs per dozen difference between to egg size which also increases of the equipment which can in to producers but may also re- the price of large and checked as age of layers increases. In of the equipment which can increase the quantity and propor-

This means keeping equipment and repair, minimizing the stress applied to eggs as they move or are conveyed over the equipment. Unfortunately, it appears that adverse handling of eggs may not show up as damaged shells until later in the marketing channel Also, shell damage may occur after candling and the cause go unnotic-

Perhaps more frequent inspection of eggs after packing should be made, to determine the percent of eggs which are checked This would help in determining and correcting causes of shell damage before the problem becomes too se-

Correcting shell damage problems can be a dificult task and is a responsibility of all segments of the industry. It involves starting with adequate shell strength Then handling techniques must be such as to minimize shell damage.

In today's never - ending search for ways to reduce egg processing and marketing costs, there is a tendency to speed up operations and increase productivity in order to reduce costs. Speeding up machinery can result in increased breakage. This raises the question whether increasing machine speed above optimum levels really reduces costs of processing eggs.

Unfortunately all eggs in consumer packs are not free of shell damage. This may be another factor which may retard egg consumption.

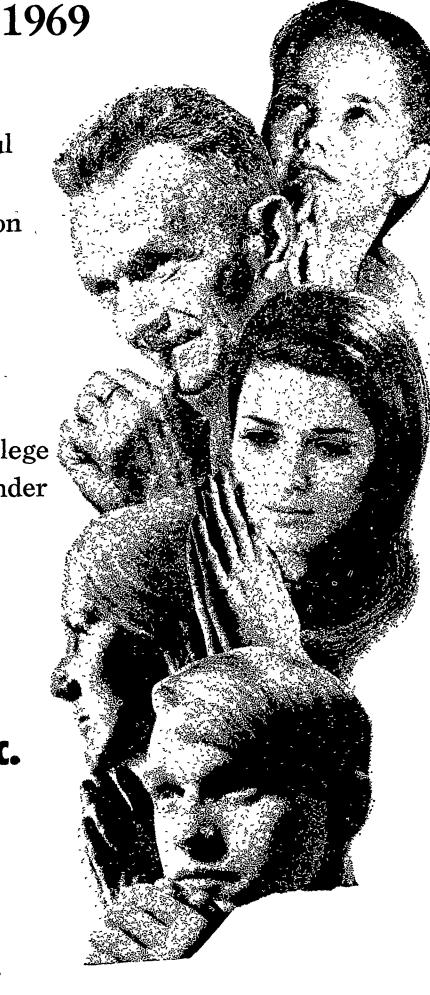
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