

Poultry Industry Building - Related Problems and Solutions

By Floyd W. Hicks
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Agriculture's first responsibility to the environment is the maintenance of farm land, green land, forest land, wildlife habitat and watersheds.

This statement, in one form or another, has been quoted with increasing regularity and intensity in recent months — and justifiably so, as it applies to our trust and responsibility to the ecology.

Whereas the words environmental requirements of poultry refer to the aggregate of all external conditions affecting life processes of poultry, we provide housing conditions for poultry to provide comfortable quarters, that is optimum environment, for chicks and layers for return in the form of a profit. This profit might be contributed to by conserving the energy of the fowl, stimulating growth, maintaining egg production during

weather extremes, improving fertility and hatchability, or just providing conditions conducive to good health.

It goes without saying that we want to provide efficient and suitable working conditions for the operator and hopefully to stimulate him to be a better poultryman.

And third, perhaps most important, to keep us in the poultry business in the future, this housing must provide the type of facility to help the operator and his management system to get along with his neighbors.

I call your attention to the handout called "Environmental Requirements of Poultry" This particular piece of literature was published some time ago; however, the principles are basically unchanged. Although there has been an addition of data that has contributed to our fund of knowledge relative to

Editor's note: Floyd W. Hicks, Penn State Poultry Extension specialist, presented the following speech to the American Society of Agricultural Engineers at Hershey in October Entitled "The Role of the Building in Poultry Environment," it presents a comprehensive look at building-related problems facing poultrymen today and the types of efforts underway to solve the problems.

While much of the material presented may have little or no application to the individual local poultryman, we suggest that each poultryman review the specific issues raised — such as how to dispose of manure, the best way of moving air, and the type of construction — in relation to his own operation. Such a review, we believe, can help the farmer understand his operation better.

the environmental requirements of poultry.

Industry Improvements

The poultry industry has developed so rapidly in recent years that improvements in housing, mechanical devices, feed distribution and egg collection, and so forth, have greatly improved the efficiency of our industry through the cooperation of you as engineers.

It is now possible to house many thousands of hens in a relatively small area and care for them with an ever-diminishing amount of labor, but it should be quickly pointed out that even the best so-called "automated" houses need to be managed as mechanical factories, built basically "for the birds".

"Automated" egg farms located near centers of population, in combination with high-speed refrigerated trucks, have made the delivery of a high quality product a reality in this age. It also has meant that distance has been reduced as a factor of competitive advantage for our region.

As our industry continues to

mature and we begin to solve some of our marketing and production problems, a new dimension of problems threatens to undermine this industry which has come so far.

I am referring to the waste disposal problems that relate directly to our ecology and also have a lot to do with our housing-management problems in the poultry industry. The public often reacts on a mass hysteria basis and certainly our poultry industry is not immune from this mass action.

Problems, which were ignored or taken lightly a few months ago, have now become of major importance. Odors, flies, feathers, noise and other pollution factors, that went unnoticed or were tolerated a few months ago, are now so objectionable that they threaten the very basis of our industry in some parts of the country.

This is not to criticize the concept of environmental improvement, but to point out that the poultry industry needs to take a

continued look at the requirements of our industry to get along with their neighbors as we have done in the past.

Manure Systems

To discuss one of these problems, that of manure disposal, would require a review of what is found in the field. Many poultry farmers do have problems in handling their poultry manure, and consider if they can dispose of the poultry manure at no cost to themselves or at minimum cost, they are quite

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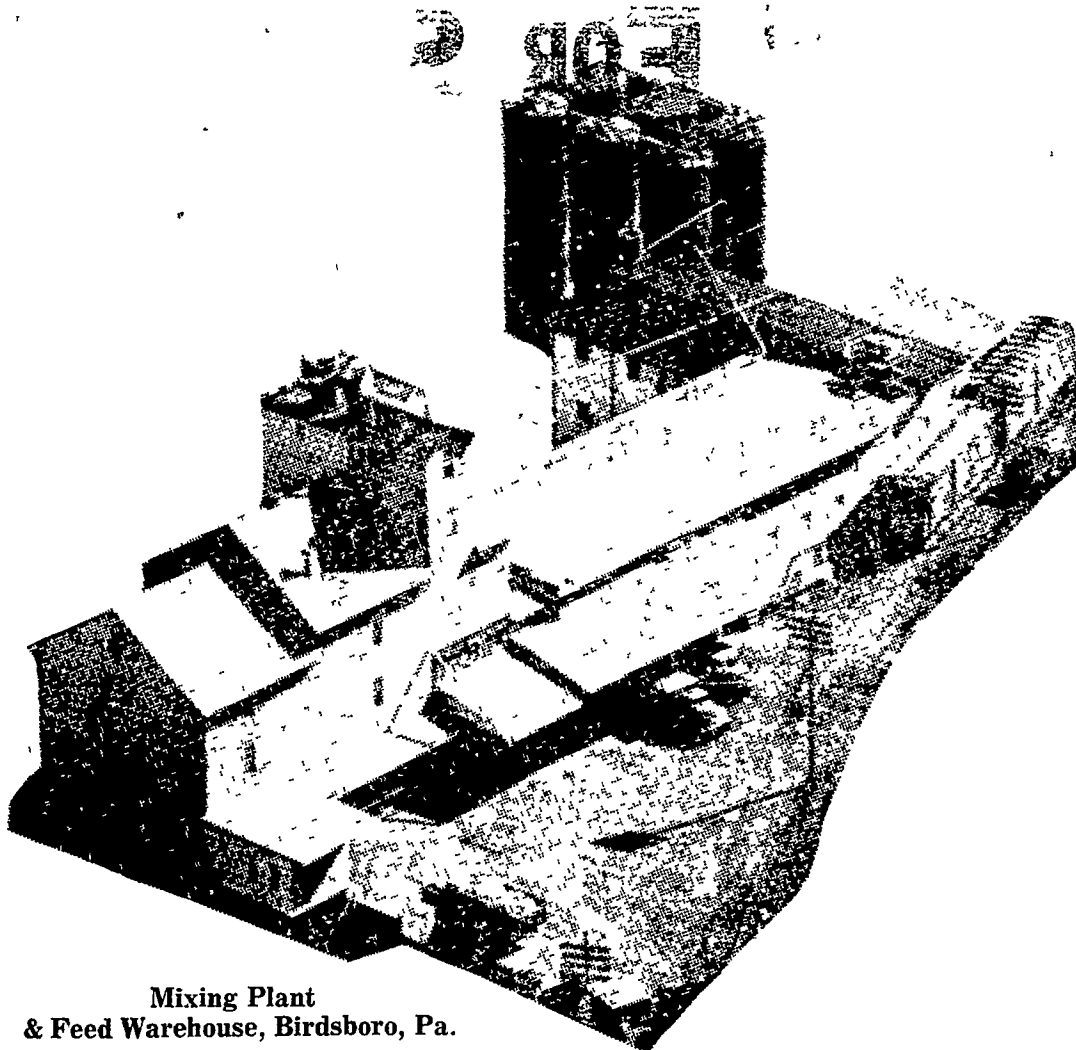
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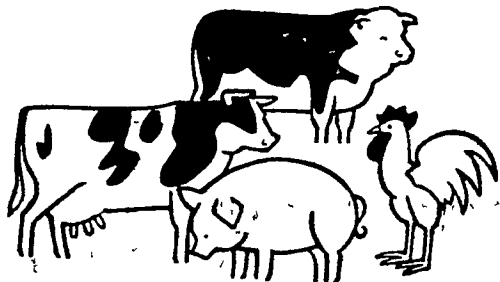
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