

Cracked, Broken Eggs Viewed As Important Industry Issue

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eggs, according to Irwin, include cold eggs going into hot water, eggs hitting each other, pressure in picking up eggs, bumped eggs in the line of production, and thin egg shells.

Sauder gave some additional factors for egg shell deterioration: breeding, poor vaccination, careless handling on the farm or elsewhere, faulty gathering equipment, and keeping hens too long.

Herb Jordan, Penn State poultry specialist, said he doesn't think that breakage is much of a problem if it averages only two to four per cent of eggs produced. Poultrymen have a problem if the percentage rises to four to eight per cent and the problem is acute if it is over eight per cent. Jordan said he has seen some flocks with 20 per cent cracks

Jordan emphasized that there are at least two to three dozen areas or categories of shell damage. One is a thin shell or thin side. Cracks can occur inside the bird and one study found that 50 of 200 birds had cracks in their eggs before they were laid. This indicates that "happiness is a healthy bird," Jordan said.

He said that diseases, particularly respiratory conditions, hurt not only egg production and size, but also results in a high incidence of egg damage. To cut down on disease and losses that result, he recommended better building insulation, keeping manure dry, stopping waterers from running over, eliminating roof leaks, stopping outside water from coming in, keeping the house ventilated, and cleaning often to keep the building dry.

Dr. Dwight Schwartz, Penn State poultry veterinarian, said that a thin, weak, rough egg-shell can result from disease. During disease, production falls

off as the bird's resources are redirected toward fighting off the disease, he explained.

Only Newcastle and bronchitis produce oviduct damage, which is permanent with a certain number of hens. If these hens can be identified, they should be eliminated from the flock because they will always lay thin shelled eggs, he said.

He urged poultrymen with flock problems to submit four to six hens which show the basic symptoms of the problem to the state diagnostic lab.

Kermit Birth, Penn State marketing specialist, said cracks can occur from abuse of the egg after it is laid.

Sometimes, he said, an egg may be bumped several times before it cracks. But the crack which occurred with the final bump may not have resulted if it had not been for the weakening from the previous bumps.

The breaks can occur anywhere from the nest to the table, he noted. "We can never be sure where the crack occurs, because the egg may have been bumped more than once before it cracked."

He said he gets many complaints from consumers that they can't get the egg out of the carton. While the damage usually occurs before the consumer buys the egg, the consumer sometimes is at fault, he said.

Some areas where problems occur include anywhere that eggs bump eggs, pressure on eggs, lifting eggs up or setting them down, speed in movement, change of direction, conveyors, anywhere in the packing process.

Both Jordan and Birth emphasized that large and medium eggs have a much smaller breakage rate than do jumbo and extra large eggs. They indicated that this may result because the larger eggs are handled more under present procedures and because existing equipment and packing is geared primarily for the smaller eggs.

In comments on questions from the audience, it was noted that after July 1, 1972, cracked eggs will have to go to the breaker, restricting the potential economic return from these eggs and making sound eggs much more important to the industry.

Asked how many months a flock should be kept in production, Jordan said he doesn't like to see over 12 months unless it's a "good flock." Birth said this is a decision which has to be based on profit.

On the question of the influence of genetics on the breakage problem, Dr. Schwartz said certain strains of birds have had much more breakage than others



R. W. Sauder Inc employees who helped show local poultrymen through the processing plant Thursday evening are: left to right, Melvin Gehman, producer service

representative; Mrs. Margie Shelly, candler, Kenneth Gibble, company inspector, and Leon Weaver, transportation manager.



Among those participating in the educational meeting on egg shell quality in Lititz Thursday evening are: left to right, Jay W. Irwin, associate Lancaster County ag agent, Dr. Dwight Schwartz, Penn

State poultry veterinarian; Herb Jordan, Penn State poultry specialist, and Kermit Birth, Penn State poultry marketing specialist.

Field Day Site Asked

The Lancaster County Soil and Water Conservation District is still seeking a site for its annual Conservation Field Day, according to J. Everett Kreider.

Kreider said the District is seeking a 25 to 30 acre field, preferably from someone who is practicing conservation. He suggested that barley stubble would be fine.

The annual field day includes tractor plowing and land judging contests and many other activities.

Date of the annual event last year was July 28, but no date has been set yet for this year.

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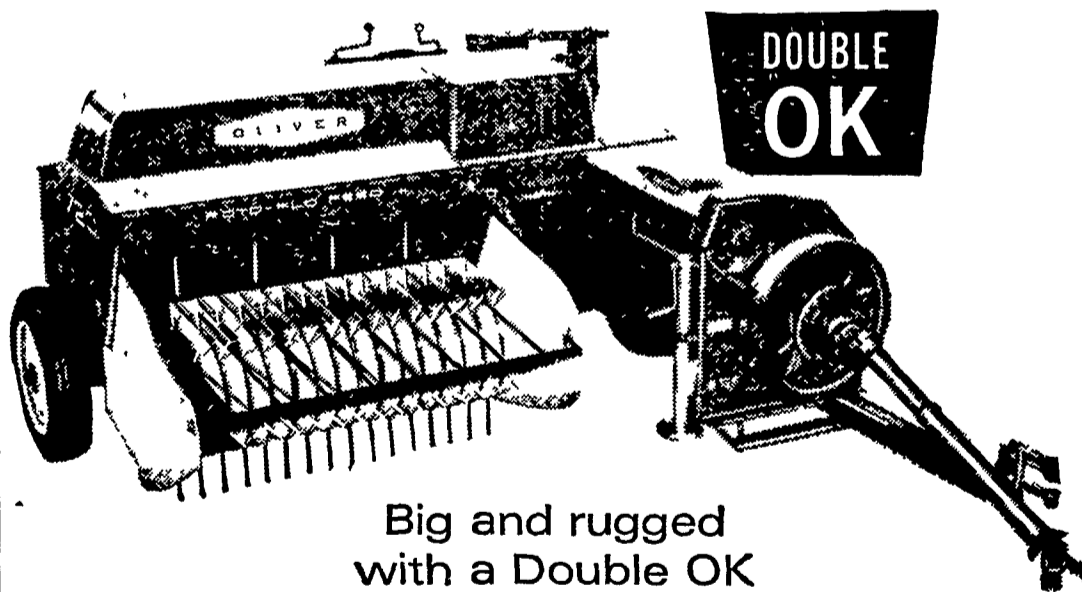
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