

# Higher Chick Hatch Helps Egg Market

The number of eggs produced in the nation continues to average above the same period a year earlier, according to a recent report by Penn State University and the USDA.

In August there were nearly 316 million layers on farms, about the same number as a year earlier. But eggs produced per layer continued to average above a year earlier. Production in August averaged between one and two per cent more than a year earlier.

One of the factors which contributed to weakness in market egg prices earlier this year was the reduction in numbers of chicks hatched for laying flock replacements and meat production. Thus, fewer eggs used for hatching meant more eggs available for the table egg market.

On the average, a 15 per cent change in number of chicks hatched, laying and broiler-types, means about one per cent more eggs available for table egg use and a one per cent increase in egg supply can mean a four per cent or more decrease in farm egg price.

Through June this year, the number of broiler-type chicks hatched by commercial hatcheries averaged about four per cent below a year earlier, while in July the quantity hatched was about the same as a year earlier.

However, in August the quantity of broiler-type chicks hatched exceeded the levels of a year earlier by two per cent.

For the first three weeks of September the number of broiler-type chicks housed in 22 commercial broiler producing areas by weeks was between eight and nine per cent above a year earlier. Eggs in incubators for the same weeks were between three and six per cent more than a year earlier, thus adding strength to market egg prices since the number of eggs available for table egg use decreased.

The quantity of chicks hatched for laying flock replacements averaged about nine per cent below a year earlier through July this year. In August about 29 per cent more chicks were hatched than a year earlier, but only a little more than were hatched in August, 1969. Eggs in incubators in the first of September for hatching laying-type chicks were about 15 per cent below a year earlier and were up five per cent for broiler-type chicks.

Each one per cent change in the quantity of broiler-type chicks hatched has a greater impact on the supply of market eggs than does the same per cent change in quantity of chicks hatched for market egg production. Through August this year over two billion broiler-type chicks were hatched compared with only about one-third of a billion laying-type chicks.

About 6.9 per cent of the eggs produced by the nation's laying flock through June of 1971 were used for hatching chicks compared with 7.5 per cent in 1970, making about 1/2 per cent more eggs available for the shell egg market.

In August, hatching of chicks required about 1/4 per cent more of total egg production for the month than a year earlier. Thus, hatching needs added strength to market egg prices by taking about 3/4 per cent more eggs during the month as compared to the first half of the year.

#### Breakers May Drop

Although the quantity of eggs sold to breakers, as indicated by the commercial egg movement report, has averaged above a year earlier throughout most of this year, it is not likely this increase would continue

throughout the remainder of the year.

If needs for breaking stock decrease, it can weaken egg prices. It could offset the effect of a possible continued increase in the quantity of broiler chicks hatched.

When forecasting future prices, consider all aspects of supply and demand at a given time. This would include, among other things, demand for hatching eggs, exports, imports, government purchases, production of

frozen and dried eggs, non-salable eggs, and military purchases, advises A. Kermit Birth, Pennsylvania State University marketing specialist.

Prices are expected to continue relatively low, but could be closer to a year earlier levels than through September this year, Birth said.

The increase in production the last three months of 1971 is not likely to be as great as during the first eight months of the year, he added.

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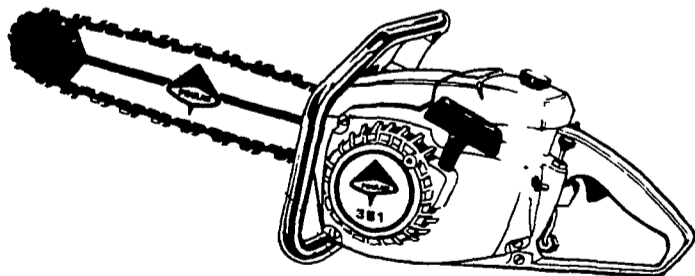
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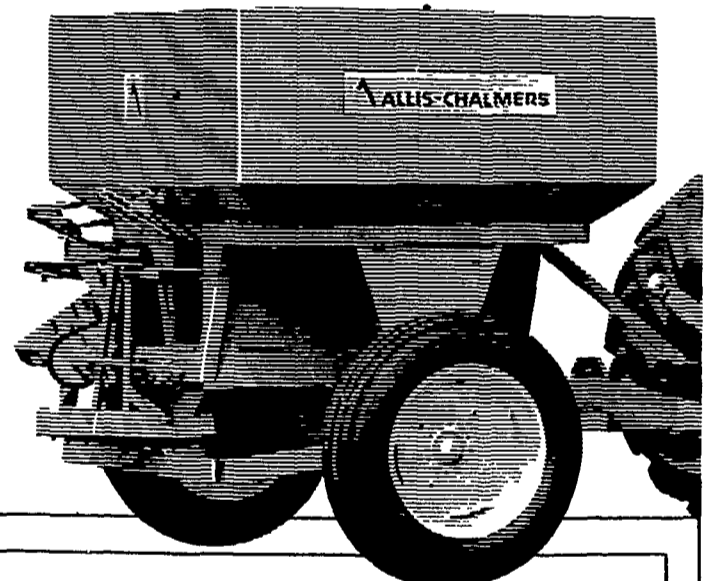
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