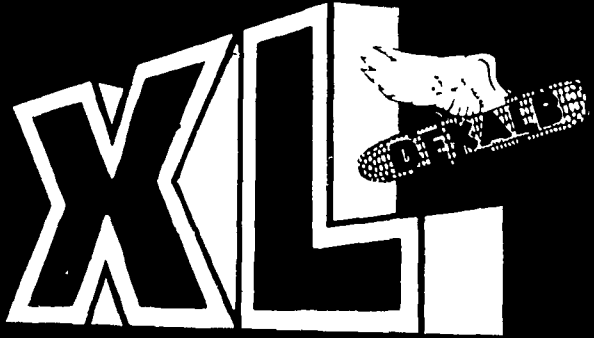




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Direct-to-Retail Egg Sales Best Bet for Small Flocks

Egg producers with 25,000 hens or less should be able to survive current inflation and increase their income by selling directly to retail outlets rather than to wholesale markets, according to a recent study by farm economists of The Pennsylvania State University.

The success of such small flock owners generally depends on low fixed costs, use of part-time labor in addition to family help, semi-automatic equipment for efficient handling of low egg volume, and lower wage rates than paid by large flock owners, stated Dr. Anthony P. Stemberger, professor of agricultural economics at Penn State.

"The successful small producer should be very much aware of buyer characteristics, locations, distances between stops on a delivery route, and volume of eggs per sale in developing profitable prices," Dr. Stemberger affirmed.

Efficient owners of less than 25,000 hens may be able to deliver eggs to retail outlets at fairly low costs, he pointed out. For example, retail outlets only one-half mile apart, taking 150 dozen eggs per delivery, produce delivery costs of less than a half cent per dozen at a price about 8 cents above the wholesale farm egg price.

On the other hand, selling to retail stores buying only 15 dozen eggs per stop, each located a mile apart, produces delivery costs of about 4½ cents per dozen. In this case, the egg producer needs 12 cents per dozen above the wholesale farm egg price.

The above results were obtained from wage rates of \$1.80 per hour for processing labor and \$2.75 per hour for delivery labor. Many small producers in Pennsylvania are able to obtain labor at these rates, Dr. Stemberger and associates learned. At these prices, the small producer can wash, size, grade, and carton eggs at cost competitive with commercial firms. The study analyzed operating costs and profits of egg producer-processors over several years, largely in the Pittsburgh and Philadelphia areas. The average producer in the study handled 100 cases of eggs a week.

Fees for Meat, Poultry Inspection Increased

The U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today raised meat and poultry inspection fees-

-effective Oct. 14—to reflect increased government salaries under the recent federal pay raise.

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) said the new rate for base time, overtime, and holiday inspection service will be \$10.24 per hour. The present rate is \$9.60 per hour.

The regular 40-hour week for mandatory federal inspection is paid by the government. The packer pays only for overtime and holiday inspection service.

APHIS also inspects certain meat and poultry products on a voluntary basis—such as pet foods, rabbits, and products which require specific export certifications. Inspection for these products is paid for solely by the packer, and also will be subject to the new rate of \$10.24 per hour for base time and overtime.

Copies of the amendment, which is scheduled for publication in the Federal Register on Oct. 12, are available from the Meat and Poultry Inspection Administrative Group, Washington, D. C. 20250.

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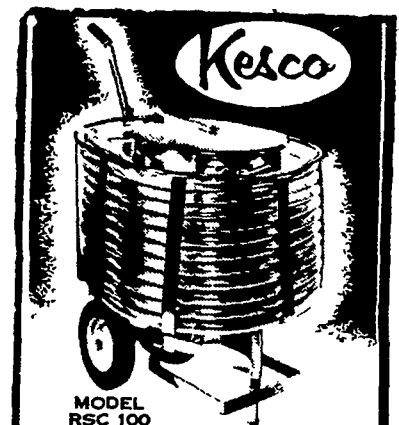


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