

Dequay Lauchmann, left, and Dr. Glenn Bressler discuss the advantages of plastic mesh flooring for broiler-breeder operations. Lauchman just built a brand

new facility which incorporates the mesh floors, in addition to many other techniques which grew out of Dr. Bressler's research at Penn State.

Broiler Egg House Opens

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can be picked up by anyone, outside the pens. Roll-away nests, also designed by Bressler, deliver eggs outside the pens, too, for easier gathering.

Mesh floors had been one of Bressler's research topics for a number of years, but he started with wire mesh instead of plastic. "The wire floors worked with Leghorns," Bressler said, "but we had foot problems when we put heavy breeders on those floors. Mostly it was the cockerels who were getting sore feet. Plastic mesh gives more

support, and we seem to have licked the foot problem."

Ventilation is another important feature of the new house. A draft-free air flow is maintained by a positive pressure ventilation system using fans at both ends of the building to draw fresh air into the building as it is needed, or to circulate the old air. Beneath the mesh floors, two banks of circulating fans keep air moving over the droppings to dry them out and to cut odor problems. Lauchmann expects to have to clean out these pits about once a year.

Lauchmann's labor requirements for his new house will be significantly lower than they'd have been had he built a more conventional structure. Watering and feeding are both automatic, and all the eggs roll to the sides of the pens. The bulk of the daily chores will be handled by Lauchmann's wife and children, and it's expected they'll spend anywhere from five to eight man hours daily in the house.

Production costs are expected to run about \$1 per dozen eggs, again according to Bressler. This

cost isn't expected to vary a great deal from that in conventional houses, but the producer will be able to get more hatching eggs, because he'll have more birds in a given area and he'll have no soiled floor eggs going to waste. "Anyway," Bressler pointed out,

"feed costs and the cost of birds are normally borne by the contractor in this kind of operation. The contractee, like Mr. Lauchmann, wants to raise as many birds as he can, and this house lets him grow more birds for his building dollar."

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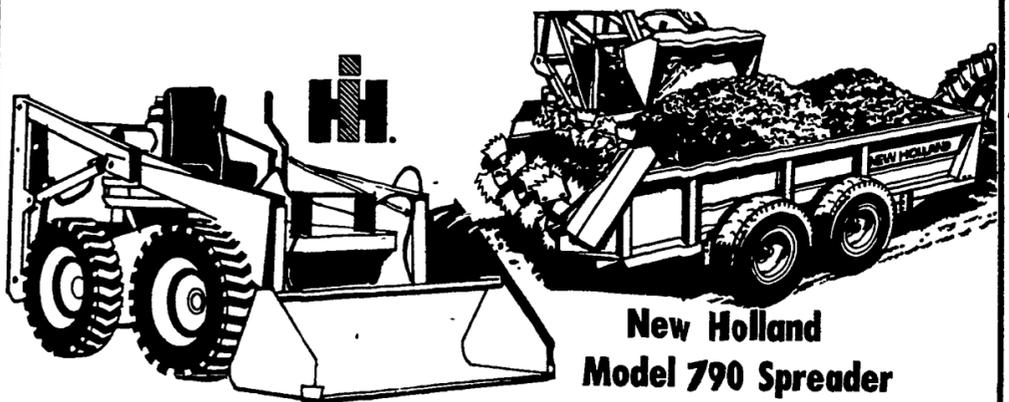
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