

Broiler - Turkey growing discussed at educational meeting

By MELISSA PIPER

LANCASTER — Poultry growers have seen myriad changes throughout the past decade and are still experiencing advances in technology but good common sense and everyday management tools will still be valid in years to come, according to three poultry experts who met here late last week.

Guests of the Lancaster County Poultry Association, Dr. Richard Long, technical specialist for Merck Animal Health Division, Charlton Whalley, manager of the Broiler Grow Out Division for Bayshore Foods and Bob Farrell, procurement manager for Swift Inc., spoke before a large audience at the Farm and Home Center as a third meeting in a series of educational programs for poultry growers in this area.

Dr. Long addressed the group first and used a slide presentation to reinforce his ideas on starting broilers. Although the health specialist noted that many growers are under contract, he explained that it is still important for the manager of a poultry operation to use good judgement in his everyday practices. "The input that a manager gives to his operation is just as important as the contract itself," he added.

"Individual farmers are still required in this business and their work is important to us."

Long criticized those producers who filled their houses with expensive automated equipment only to find that the small chicks could not use it. Pointing to his slides, Long showed unused automatic waterers and feeders which were either too high, blocking travel for the small animals or too difficult to operate.

"Even though those clear water bottles look out of place in a modern operation, I wouldn't think of starting chicks on anything else," he stated.

Citing the need for adequate feed and water, Long again referred to slides which showed empty water bottles, and spilled feed pans. "In this type of operation you're just kidding yourself," he chided "this isn't operating efficiently."

Naming one major fault with many managers, Long noted that too often junk accumulates around the poultry houses and inside the pens allowing rats to become attracted to the area. "Clear away the weeds, equipment and junk," he stated, "chicks are distracted by even a light bulb and will flock around it by instinct."

"It takes a lot of hard work and common sense to raise chicks," the health specialist explained, "but if you do the job it can be a good business."

Doing a good job is what makes a successful manager, according to Charlton Whalley who spoke to the poultry growers on what supervisors expect from them.

"A good grower is an important asset to any company," Whalley noted and that is why flock

supervisors expect the best upkeep and decisions."

A former flock supervisor himself, Whalley cited several important factors that managers should be aware of. "One thing is extremely important is to cull then get rid of the animals," he explained. "Dead broilers should not be left lying around as they invite disease and predators."

Whalley also noted the importance of properly cleaning feeding and watering equipment and also cleaning of the house itself.

"Remember to blow old accumulated dust off the building fixtures," he said, "and wash the house down when weather permits."

The Bayshore manager also told the growers that heat was vital to broiler growth in the winter. "Make chicks comfortable with heat in the winter," he related, "before chickens come into the building heat the facility 24-36 hours so that the dampness is gone."

Whalley closed his remarks by reminding growers to also keep access roads in good condition for the truck drivers.

"Paying the towing charges can add up," he noted, "your presence when a load goes out is helpful for giving directions and showing the driver the best methods for getting near the poultry house without getting stuck."

Turkeys are hard to raise and need special attention according to Bob Farrell who represented the Swift Company at the meeting.

Farrell reiterated much of the recommendations for producing healthy broilers and stated, "growing turkeys is very similar to broilers but they do need much more care."

One area which the Swift representative dwelt on was the incidences of drug residues in turkey. "We must be extremely careful of this problem," he noted, "it takes proper care and understanding to work this out."

"Know just what drugs may be in the food or water and make sure they are used properly," he cautioned.

Adding that many turkey producers were still independent he stated, "small farmers must begin to realize that marketing will not be getting easier, they should know their markets and be in agreement on terms."

Pork honors awarded

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here. Dale Nolt, Manheim, captured the grand champion entry with his 200 pound hog. The gilt's statistics recorded at one inch backfat; 6.7 inch of loin-eye; 32.6 percent ham-loin with a length of 30 inches.

George Getz, Lancaster, exhibited the reserve grand champion which entered the contest at 205 pounds. The barrow recorded one inch of backfat with 5.5 inches of loin-eye; 32.3 ham-loin percentage and a length of 30.8 inches.

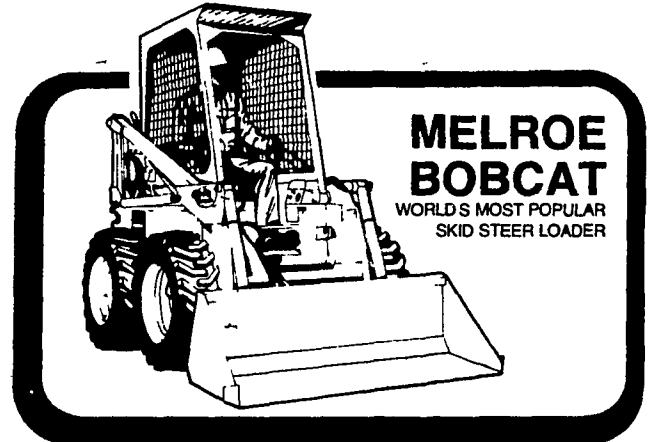
Awards were also presented to the winners of the Lancaster County Fall Carcass Contest. John Strawbridge took champion honors for his 215 pound entry with Gehman's Mill capturing reserve honors for their 235 pound hog.

John Henkel, Strasburg, was honored at the Lan-

caster Pork Producers banquet for having served as a pork director at local, state and national levels and for his service in promoting pork. The Yorkshire producer received a plaque from his fellow producers.

Kerry Boyd, Ephrata R1, was named the winner of the James Z. Martin Swine

Achievement Award which was presented by M. Max Smith, Lancaster County Agent. Smith noted that Boyd had successfully completed several 4-H and FFA swine projects and had captured the 4-H Champion honors for his hog entry at the county show held last summer.



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