

Ky. hillbilly teaches sound poultry lesson

By JOANNE SPAHR
LANCASTER — Rufus could teach a poultryman a thing or two.

"He was an ingenious Kentucky mountaineer — he had no education, but he was brilliant," claimed Dr. Ronnie Graves, Extension poultry specialist from the University of Kentucky who chronicled the history of his back hills friend Rufus at a recent educational seminar sponsored by the Lancaster County Poultry Association and Penn State University.

"He only had a second grade education," the man with the delightful southern drawl continued, "But, I consider him to be the best poultryman I ever met."

In 1957 Rufus had 5000 layers and got 245 eggs per hen housed in 12 months. "And, how'd he get that?" questioned Graves. "He got that by spending time with the chickens — why he has each and every one personally named!" proclaimed the southern Extension specialist with an

evangelistic ring to his voice.

Graves continued with his narrative by explaining one of his first encounters with Rufus.

"As a green poultry specialist, I went over to Rufus' and saw he has those round hanging feeders. And, I said, 'Rufus, you need more feeders. Then your egg production will go up.'"

To this, Rufus replied, "Why, son, I already get 245 eggs per hen housed."

Undaunted, the green poultry specialist continued looking for errors in Rufus's set-up.

"We came to a 1500 laying house up in the holler," Graves twanged. "And, it had one Swiss waterer in the center of it, and I said, 'Rufus, I'll tell ya what cha gotta doo. If ya put more waterers in this house, you'll get bigger eggs'."

To this, the wise poultryman replied, "Son, they're already so big they're tearin' the hens to pieces!"

Realizing his ignorance, the green poultry specialist eventually gave up trying to hand out sage advice.

"Rufus taught me a lot," concluded Graves. "He taught me that there's no substitute for good management. You can buy the finest equipment and the best feed and the best chickens, but you've got to get your feet wet, fellas!"

Putting the moral of his story into concrete fact, Graves pointed out that a one per cent increase in production for 20,000 laying hens is equal to \$2400 to the poultryman. And, a one per cent reduction in undergrades also comes to \$2400.

And, on feed efficiency, if the poultryman is able to feed his chickens 1/10 of a pound less feed per dozen eggs, the result is \$2800 saved. Taking that example a little further, Graves computed that if feed conversion were high enough for a poultryman to feed 1/2 a pound less feed, the total

saved would be \$14,000, based on \$140 feed.

Moving onto a new thought, Graves proclaimed, "Marketing eggs is the name of the game. It doesn't matter how many eggs you get if you can't get them to market!"

Molting was also a topic of Graves' attention.

"There are two types of molting," the poultry specialist twanged, "Desperation molting and planned molting."

"Desperation molting comes up in the case where the poultryman winds up 12 to 14 months away, and the credit man says you don't have any credit to buy chickens this year," Graves pointed out to the accompaniment of chuckles from the audience.

"At this point, the poultryman says 'What am I going to do? I'm going to molt my chickens,'" says Graves.

Chronicling how a grower can wind up in this predicament, the Kentucky

poultry specialist noted that this can happen through bad management, poor production, low egg prices, high mortality, and factors which can't be controlled such as the prices of grain and feed.

"What you wind up with is no profits," Graves said flatly.

Planned molting, on the other hand, is one which the producer has planned from the time the birds are in production six or seven months. In planned molting, the poultryman also decides where to buy his pullets no less than five or six months in advance.

"Otherwise, you get stressed pullets," Graves points out.

For a planned molt, Graves says that the producer needs to consider the external factors, or those things over which he has no control, such as egg prices both present and future and similarly, feed prices.

He also has to consider his

mark. "Once you molt that flock of chickens, you're not going to get the same type of eggs," Graves stated. "You've got to be sure that the market will take a higher percentage of extra large and jumbo eggs. And, you'd better be paid a premium price," he pointed out.

Graves also told the industry to consider the internal factors — those which they do have control over.

Each poultryman should look at the rate of lay of his flock. Once molted, the rate of lay will be less than when the flock was at the pullet stage, but higher than when they went out of production.

"If they don't have a good rate of lay before, it's not a particularly good idea to molt them," Graves stated.

Each chicken farmer should also consider the percentage of undergrades,



Dr. Ronnie Graves

particularly due to shell problems, and know where the problems come from. Once the birds are molted, shell quality temporarily improves, but it doesn't last through the laying period.

Another factor which should be considered is mortality.

"Mortality is going to be somewhat higher later," Graves states.

He also warned the growers present to check feed efficiency, or feed per dozen eggs, stating that the conversion is going to take higher feed the second time around.

Also the producer needs to check with his breeder to find out whether his particular chicken lends itself to molting.

In conclusion, Graves reviewed the facts. Molting increases egg size, mortality and feed per dozen eggs. The birds give less production than when pullets, but more than before they molted.

"If you have poor quality eggs before you molt, you're only delaying the problem," Graves continued.

"So, look at all the facts before you molt," the Kentucky poultry specialist said. "And, make your decision in advance."

Sencor

Di-Syston

SENCOR gets the weeds

SENCOR 50% Wettable Powder provides dependable, consistent control of a wide spectrum of tough broadleaf weeds, including lambsquarters, wild mustard, ragweed and Pennsylvania smartweed. It is effective against many grasses as well. Lasting performance reduces cultivations to a minimum.

SENCOR 50% Wettable Powder can be applied by air or ground as a preemergent or postemergent, or a split application of both, when used as directed. Its excellent water solubility assures quick activation with rainfall or irrigation.

Spud makers

DI-SYSTON gets the insects

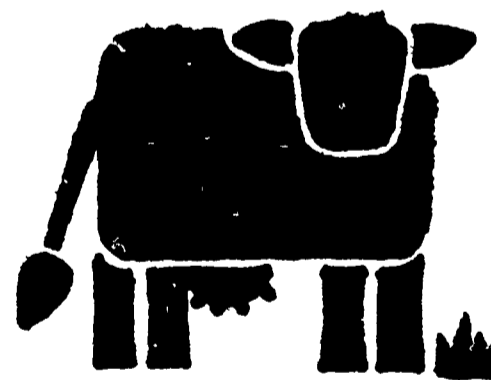
A planting-time application of DI-SYSTON is the best protection you can buy against a host of potato pests. DI-SYSTON knocks green peach aphids and potato flea beetles out of your spuds fast. And it keeps 'em out for weeks with lasting systemic protection. DI-SYSTON is available in liquid or granular formulations.

7823

SENCOR and DI-SYSTON are Reg. TMs of the Parent Company of Farbenfabriken Bayer GmbH, Leverkusen



Chemagro Agricultural Division
Möbay Chemical Corporation
Box 4913, Kansas City, Missouri 64120



CREUTZBURG, INC. QUALITY LIVESTOCK SUPPLIES

★ OPEN DAILY - 8:00 TO 5:00 ★
SATURDAY - 8:00 TO 12:00
OWNER: HARRY E. LANDIS

ALL PRODUCTS AVAILABLE BY MAIL

Send For FREE Catalog
CREUTZBURG, INC.
Lincoln Highway East, Box 7, Paradise, Pa 17562
(717) 768-7181

NAME _____
STREET _____
CITY _____
STATE _____ ZIP _____