

Bowed leg turkeys traced to mutant gene

UNIVERSITY PARK — The problem of bowed legs in turkeys, serious in the poultry industry, is caused by a mutation or alteration in the genes, a scientist from Penn State declared recently. Dr. Edward G. Buss, poultry geneticist at Penn State, was addressing the 67th annual meeting of the Poultry Science Association at Clemson University, Clemson, S.C.

Dr. Buss said the mutation creating bowlegs in turkeys is a single gene trait. He has observed and studied the problem for 29 years. His findings apply to male and female turkeys alive at 24 weeks of age.

He claimed this hereditary condition, termed bowed hock of turkeys, can be reduced by applying traditional genetic breeding tests used by geneticists working for commercial turkey-producing firms.

"There may be other factors leading to lameness

of legs in turkeys, but genes are a major factor for this bowed-hock situation," Dr. Buss affirmed.

The genetic factor even produced the bowed-hock condition among turkeys of the smaller varieties, he pointed out. This is significant, he added, since bowed-hocks have been commonly associated with excessive weights in today's larger breeds of turkeys.

Although mostly a problem with male turkeys, bowed-hocks appear occasionally in females. Dr. Buss claimed the tendon is abnormal rather than the hock joint. And he indicated that tendons of bowed-hock turkeys have a rough surface compared to tendons of normal turkeys.

Dr. Buss and associates at Penn State are now making chemical assays of turkey tendons to find chemical differences, if any, between bowed-hock turkey tendons and those of normal turkeys.



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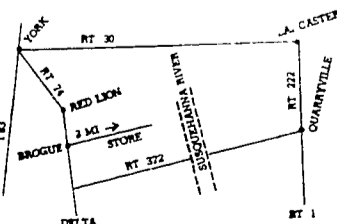
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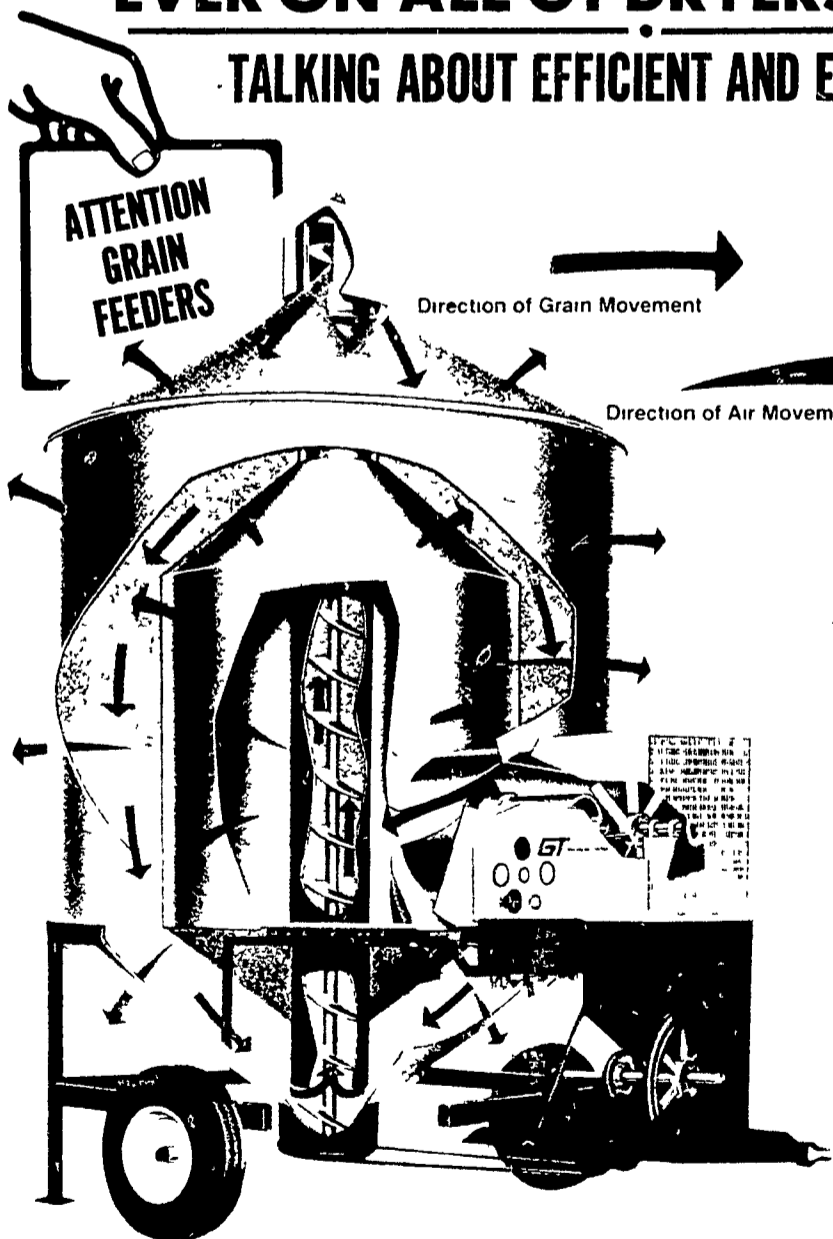
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