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Worrisome egg syndrome moving east

WASHINGTON, D.C. - An unusual problem in laying flocks, known as Soft Shell Syndrome, has been reported recently by egg producers in many parts of the country. In cases reported so far, the flocks typically develop symptoms at around 40 weeks of age. Eggs become sandy-textured and have soft spots

on either or both ends. Soft Shell Syndrome normally lasts less than four weeks and is accompanied by a minimal drop in production. The problem appears to have started on the West Coast and is moving eastward, with the Midwest currently experiencing the highest incidence.

The cause of Soft Shell

Syndrome is, as yet, unknown according to spokesmen for the National Poultry Improvement Plan. NPIP is currently seeking correlations with any known poultry diseases. Working in conjunction with the University of California, where extensive research into the problem is being conducted, NPIP hopes to eliminate the

syndrome before it becomes a major difficulty.

Any producer who has experienced a problem that is in any way similar to Soft Shell Syndrome should contact Dr. Peterson at NPIP phone 301/436-8438.

Sickle guard condition affects crop growth

KALAMAZOO, Mich. - "There's more to cutting than a sharp knife section. Broken or worn sickle guards have a greater effect on crop yield than most peo-

ple realize," says W.L. Pringle, agricultural forgings sales manager for Buchanan Steel Products Division of National-Standard Company, Buchanan, Michigan.

Pringle says a well-designed, forged sickle guard can last two or three years. Eventually, however, constant abuse from rocks and other obstructions

causes edge cavitation, dullness and breakage.

Cutting sections hammering against worn sickle guards quickly lose their cutting capacity and need resharpening. If not corrected, the situation can lead to a 35 per cent reduction in blade life and a loss in crop yield.

Too frequently, sloped or uneven field stubble is the first sign of poor sickle guard performance, according to Pringle. "Instead, Spring and Fall maintenance should include a thorough sickle guard examination. Guard replacement is cheap compared to the cost of equipment breakdown or low yields."

Heifer raffle sponsored

SUSSEX COUNTY, N.J. - The Sussex County Dairy 4-H Clubs are sponsoring a dairy calf raffle.

The calf, a registered Holstein, Rafam Job Lollipop, is the daughter of Hillhaven Standout Job a popular bull at Sire Power. She is also the daughter of Cream Valley Larry Lena. The calf is being raffled off for the benefit of permanent buildings at the Sussex County Farm and Horse Show. Tickets cost \$1 and are available from any dairy 4-H'er in the county. For more information call 383-3800 or 383-6237 after 3 p.m.

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