## Broilers teach college students it ain't easy growing birds for profit

NEWARK, Del. - The University of Delaware's new teaching broder house here got its first use this Spring as members of the honorary fraternity, Alpha Zeta, raised 1000 chickens in it for a fund-raising project to benefit the College of Agricultural Sciences.

The students involved came away from their first venture into commercial type broiler production with a healthy respect for any chicken farmer who manages to stay in business on a profit margin of one cent or less per bird.

In spite of a lot of hard work, good management and generous industry support, they barely broke even, reports Paul Meckley, one of their faculty advisors.

He says profits were down largely because of disease problems of the sort common in new broiler houses. These were anticipated.

In fact, there's even a term used to describe this kind of production set-back — "new house syndrome."

Actually, because of the problems they encountered, the pledges probably learned a lot more than they would have under normal conditions, notes Meckley.

When sick birds were removed from the flock, students took part in the necropsies. This way they could see just what conditions like air sac and Gumboro disease do to an anımal.

Other than the expected disease outbreak, Meckley and poultry farm supervisor Bob Alphin, Jr., say the students did a great job



Ag engineering student Eric Tschantre measures relative humidity in U of D's new teaching broiler house as part of special problem aimed at helping reduce ammonia build-up during poultry production.

managing their flock.

Between 15-20 pledges (most of them sophomores) worked with the birds under close supervision of senior AZ member Eric Tschantre. Chicks were placed in the house March 3.

Pledges were required to check twice a day to be sure automatic feeding and watering equipment was operating properly, and to monitor birds' general condition

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