

How to monitor poultry feed quality

ELIZABETHTOWN — Most poultry producers make observations or maintain records which can be helpful in accessing production problems. These records include information about the feed being utilized.

Unfortunately, in most instances, actual feed samples are not available, notes Poultry Specialist Forest Muir.

The usual procedure in

attempting to determine the cause of production problems would include having a sample of birds posted at a diagnostic laboratory and making visual observations of conditions in the poultry house.

Should the bird receive a clean bill of health from the diagnostic laboratory and no management factor can be determined to have been

involved, the production problem is often attributed to the feed, especially in production problems of short duration. Whereas, observations can be made of bird health and poultry house management, the feed has probably been consumed and is no longer available for observation and analysis.

This is true unless the producer had a quality control program which included collecting and maintaining samples from each feed delivery. If feed samples had been maintained from each delivery of feed, they could be submitted for analyses and data would be available to either support or reject the conclusion that the feed contributed to the problem.

To be practical, a feed sampling program must be simple and require a minimal amount of time, but must result in samples that are representative of the feed being fed. Here's a procedure which incorporates these features:

Purchase one dozen quart jars with lids.

Two times per week collect a sample (one quart each sampling) of feed from the auger delivering feed from the bulk bin into the poultry house. This sample should be collected while the auger is running. The quart

jar should be passed back and forth under the auger until it is filled.

A definite schedule for sampling should be developed with the sampling at least two and not more than four days apart.

Record date and time feed sample was collected, feed type, feed delivery date, feed supplier and other pertinent data on a piece of paper and seal in the jar with the sample.

Construct a shelf of sufficient size that the twelve jars can be placed on it in single file. The shelf should be located in a cool, dry place.

Place the feed sample on the shelf.

The 12 jars will allow accumulation of two feed samples per week for six weeks. They should be placed on the shelf in order of collection (from oldest to most recent).

After all 12 jars are filled, the sampling procedure is to empty and clean the jar containing the oldest sample and collect a new sample. Move all the samples on the shelf ahead one position and place the new sample on the shelf. This procedure will assure that the samples are in order with the oldest sample at one end of the shelf and the most recently collected sample at the opposite.

After each sample is

collected it should be compared to previously collected samples with regards to feed color and texture.

Implementation of this simple feed sampling procedure is an important segment of a flock monitoring program and should be initiated by all poultrymen. Since most feed related problems are isolated to individual batches of feed, the feed is often consumed before the problem is recognized.

The establishment of the above described procedure will ensure that a feed sample from previously delivered loads of feed will be available for analysis.



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