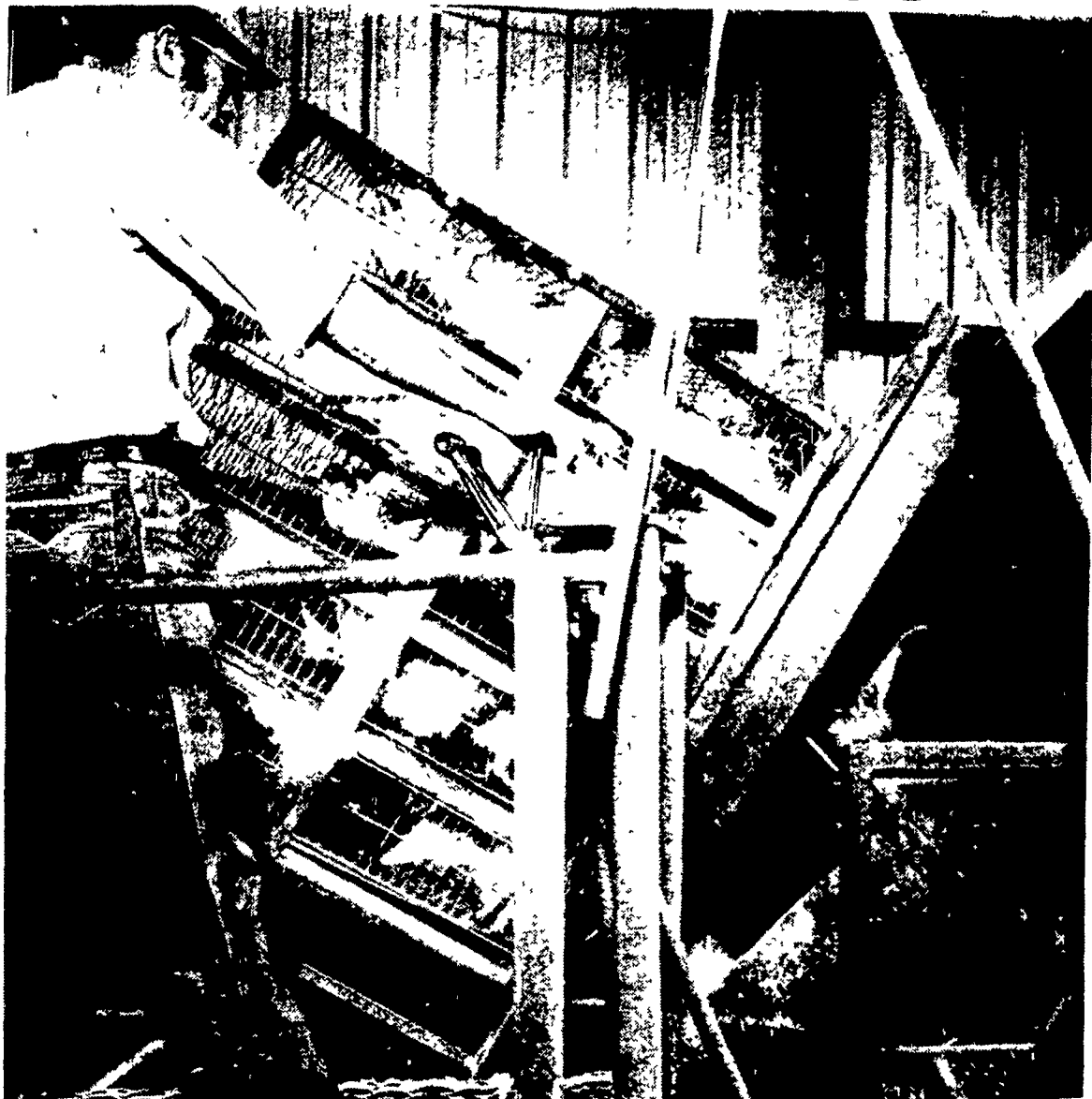


New broiler handling process pays off in \$\$\$



As the operator tilts the platform holding the poultry cage, the broilers slide slowly out onto a conveyor belt. This revolutionary new system pays off both for farmers and processors, reports USDA.

ATHENS, Ga. — A revolutionary new system developed by Agricultural Research Service engineers for handling live broilers from the farm to the processing plant is paying off in dollars—and sense—for the poultry industry.

From a 1980 prototype installed at cooperating Marell Poultry, Inc., Murrayville, Ga., the system has evolved to successful installations in processing plants in Georgia, Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi, Florida, Virginia, and Maryland, with others yet to come.

Agricultural engineer A. Don Shackelford, former engineering technician John H. Holladay, and former agricultural engineer William K. Whitehead conceived and developed the innovative system at the Richard B. Russell Agricultural Research Center, Athens, Ga. According to Shackelford, industrywide adoption could reduce the costs of marketing poultry by approximately \$48 million annually.

One major key to the success of the new system is the use of a large-capacity metal cage, which replaces about 30 standard poultry coops for transporting live chickens. With the new cage, chickens are transported more economically and more safely and humanely.

“Practical experience with industrial receiving dock handling of the cages proves that the system can handle and empty 30 cages per

hour,” says Shackelford. “This represents a production rate of about 10,000 broilers per hour. For example, 30 of the new cages can handle a production rate of 9,600 broilers per hour compared with 800 coops per hour for a comparable number of broilers.”

A typical poultry transport truck that normally hauls 520 standard coops is now loaded with 20 cages, which can transport 1,000 broilers more than normally transported in coops.

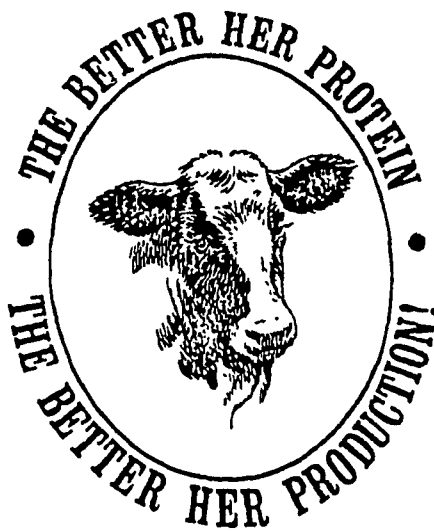
The chickens have adequate space in the large new cages, and in actual practice are loaded in accordance with the season. In warm summer months fewer birds are transported per unit of space than in winter.

The three main developments of the coopless transport system are large transport cages, hydraulic boom clamps mounted on powered lift trucks, and cage unloaders and conveyors for receiving dock handling of the containers and broilers.

The cage, 48 inches wide, 96 inches long, and 52 inches high, is divided into 10 compartments, 5 tiers high, with 2 compartments per tier. The frame is constructed of rectangular and square steel tubing. The sides and top are expanded metal spotwelded to the frame. Floors are galvanized metal.

Hinged compartment doors are (Turn to Page A37)

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