



## Chicken Coop News

Update on the poultry industry

By Herb Jordan

Penn State Extension Poultry Specialist

### Feeders Speeding Up—Collection Belts Slowing Down

Poultry producers are speeding up their feeders and slowing down their mechanical egg collection belts. They are finding that by speeding up their old feeders, or by buying the new faster feeders, they are now able to get fresher feed to their birds in less time with less noise as well as less wear and tear on the equipment.

Old slow feed chains used to make some birds wait three to four hours fresh feed, because the birds at the head of the line ate all the new feed. Now a feeder may run for only a few minutes while distributing fresh feed more uniformly to all birds. A balanced high quality diet is needed to produce quality eggs with strong shells.

Another new concept in egg collection is to slow down the belts

to one-third normal speed so that eggs are kept in their highest quality form by a minimum of jolting and bumping. Some egg belts now move so slowly you can barely notice it, and they run for long periods to collect eggs gently. This keeps egg shells intact and keeps interior quality high for the consumer.

These new production practices will benefit both poultry producers and consumers alike in that they attack two common poultry production problems—feeding the birds on time and collecting the eggs with a minimum of breakage.

Preliminary results from field studies indicate eggs lose weight in aging so that specific gravity measurements decrease during the first nine days after oviposition. Gathering eggs soon after they are laid is important to maintain egg weight and quality.

## Enrollment increases for Pa.'s 4-H clubs

LANCASTER — Four-H enrollment in Pennsylvania increased by almost 4,000 during 1982. This means 91,000 boys and girls 8 through 19 years of age are now part of this informal educational program.

Using four approaches, 4-H attracted 44,452 youth in 2,481 traditional 4-H clubs. In the cities these 4-H Clubs offered animal projects such as rabbits, dogs and pets. Repair projects involving small engines helped 4-H'ers and their parents save money by keeping the family lawn mower running. Many youngsters learned in the traditional food preparation and preservation projects.

A second approach to 4-H occurred in schools. Scientific projects such as embryology enriched the curriculum in much the same way as 4-H founders expanded school curricula beyond the three R's to include practical things such as gardening and canning. School programs in 4-H are held both during free periods and after school. 32,067 youth were enrolled in this category of 4-H.

Special interest groups are shorter-term 4-H programs con-

centrating on a single subject. Nutrition education and safety often characterize these programs which attracted 18,700 youth.

Finally, 244 boys and girls were in 4-H as individuals. Some were handicapped, some institutionalized. Others were without means to attend a 4-H meeting, so a parent served as a leader. No one project characterized this small group. They become involved in many things in their 4-H learning experience.

Now the astute reader will have added these figures and concluded the writer couldn't add because the figures totaled over 95,000. Why?

Some members belonged to more than one group. The computer at the state 4-H office in the College of Agriculture at the Pennsylvania State University found these duplications and concluded there are 91,780 Pennsylvania youngsters in 4-H in 1982!

That same computer recorded an increase of 122 4-H Clubs, or almost two per county. Pennsylvania's 4-H agents, the organizers of 4-H clubs with the volunteer adult and teen leaders, are proud to be extending the educational influence of 4-H to 4,000 more youngsters this year.

## Educate for safety

NEWARK, Del. — When it comes to farm safety, personal experience and common sense are not enough, says Ronald Jester, Extension farm safety specialist at the University of Delaware Georgetown substation.

The National Safety Council is encouraging farmers and their families to educate for safety. The emphasis is to "educate today to prevent accidents tomorrow." Education is the key to an-

icipating trouble before it starts, says Jester.

According to the council, work accidents in 1981 claimed the lives of approximately 1,900 farm workers and caused about 100,000 disabling injuries. The cost of farm accidents, including farm fires, is estimated at \$5 billion annually. Work-connected illnesses were not estimated.

Jester offers some ways to promote safety education at all levels within the agricultural community. First he suggests that farm families spend time discussing safety topics with children, and encourage them to get involved in safety programs, such as those sponsored by 4-H and FFA.

The Delaware Cooperative Extension Service sponsors a farm safety training program through Jester's office in Georgetown. Farmers are urged to plan and initiate a program geared to their needs. For information, call 302/856-5250.

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