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POULTRY SCIENCE • CAPITAL REGION • VETERINARY SCIENCE
FOOD SCIENCE • AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS • AGRICULTURAL
& BIOLOGICAL ENGINEERING • ENTOMOLOGY

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Recently, weather reports showed unseasonably warm temperatures in Arkansas and Texas, triple digit weather? I haven't heard of disastrous effects on poultry production in that area, but certainly without adequate house and bird management preparation, mortality, morbidity, reduced gain and inefficiency of performance would have occurred. In areas in the South, the producers expect the weather to turn warm to hot and make plans to ameliorate the effects.

If they don't prepare, they suffer the consequences. As the old saying goes if you fail to plan, you plan to fail. The time to prepare for avoiding the effects of high ambient temperature is now. The two strategies that are used to diminish the effects of high temperature on poultry are maintenance of ventilation equipment and reviewing what to do in when high temperatures endanger your poultry flock.

Many times we get distracted and forget to prepare for the advent of summer weather. It is usually the early heat spell that causes the greatest damage and loss of birds due to heat stress than when birds have been gradually acclimated to higher temperatures in the middle of the summer.

Therefore, take the covers off your tunnel fans, get your migration fences out, reset the phases on your computer controls or think about what has to be done

as far as ventilation and fogging and at what temperatures. If you can't remember, find someone who does know before you are in the middle of a crisis. Also, remind your employees what needs to be done in high heat and humidity situations.

The first equipment that comes to mind in making sure you are prepared for summer weather is your fans. Fans are rated for a particular efficiency to work within your house, but if they have dirty blades, if the wire mesh is coated with dust, if the shutters are stuck and dirty, and if the fan belt is loose, then you are losing precious air velocity and volume that should be used to ventilate your birds.

The next machinery that needs attention is the fogging system. Have you taken the nozzles out and soaked them in vinegar or some solution to get them clean and clear from particles that might inhibit their ability to deliver the right volume of water and in the right droplet size to maximize evaporative cooling? If not, now is the time. The pump also needs to be checked and water line rinsed and sanitized.

Other strategies to remember during high heat situations are to remove the feed from the bird in the heat of the day. The reason is that the consumption of feed produces heat during digestion and adds to the heat stress of the birds. One effective way to get this done is to raise the feed line while there is still feed in it early in the morning.

Raising the feed line gives the birds added floor space and allows all birds to eat all the way down the feeder line when the feed is re-

turned to the birds. Otherwise, the birds cause stress and carcass damage as they crowd the feeders when the auger fills the feed pans. On the other hand, water helps to cool birds. We have found that the water in the water lines rapidly reach ambient temperatures. That means, when the temperature reaches 95 degrees in the house, the temperature of the water in the line is 95 degrees and inhibits some consumption by the birds. Where are the water lines usually placed in poultry houses? Near the ceiling, one of the hotter places in the house. Flushing of hot water lines is thought of as a good strategy.

However, when the temperature reaches 95 degrees or higher, birds don't drink much no matter what the temperature of the water. Therefore, refreshing water lines is of more value toward the end of the day when the birds go back on feed. Because of the feed and water, refusal by birds during very high temperatures, the other strategies of increasing airflow over the birds, evaporative cooling and feed removal during the heat of the day become very important management techniques.

The story is told of the employee who listed in his job application that his greatest asset was his ability to sleep when the wind blows. When the strong winds came, the employer went to check out his farm and found all in order because his employee had been prepared and was fast asleep in the barn. May you be able to sleep when the temperature gets hot because your houses are properly prepared and your equipment is properly maintained

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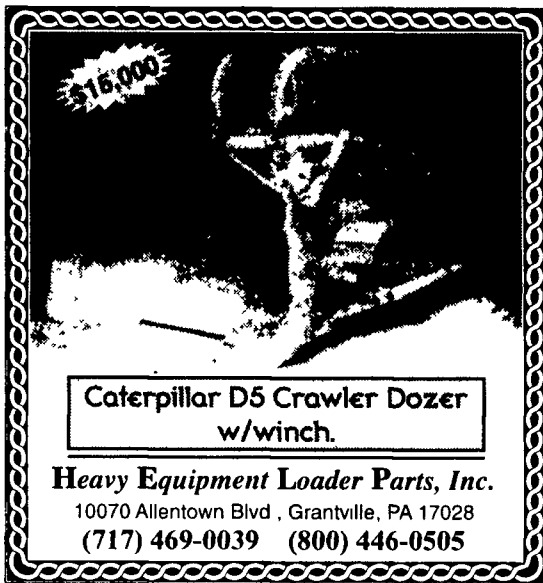
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