

Less Day Helps A Better Job

The more water birds drink, the more it helps to lower internal temperature.

"A two-degree drop may make the difference between life and death," Pantano said. However, it is important to keep water temperatures between 50-

60-degrees. Birds drink less water if the water temperature rises above these levels and, at 110-degrees, will refuse to drink any water.

It also seems to help reduce bird fatalities if the broilers are walked. They have a tendency to

sit still, and this traps more heat beneath them, causing internal temperatures to rise. A producer walking through the house will encourage the birds to move around.

It is important to be prepared for hot weather before it hap-

pens rather than waiting until temperatures escalate.

"Tunnel ventilation is definitely the way to go," Patano said. But that in itself is not enough. He stressed the importance of having kick-in thermometers and alarm and generator backups. Shutters and fogging systems need to be kept clean to allow the best possible air flow. Grass, weeds, and bushes can block airflow from entering the house. Be aware that electrical boxes can overheat and shut down.

Maintaining brooder temperatures reflects on feed conversion and yolk formation. Bradford said that yolk sac absorption is the main source for maternal antibodies to pass on an immune system to offspring.

Bradford cautioned producers to make sure that heat sources illuminate consistent heat. Although temperatures may be ac-

ceptable beneath pancake and radiant space heaters, chicks who leave to partake of food and water may walk away from the heat source and not return.

"Chicks are known not to be the smartest things in the world," Bradford said.

"Look and listen to birds for signs of uncomfortableness," Bradford said. Deafening chirps signal trouble. The chirps should sound soothing to the ear.

"If environmental requirements are not met in the first week, the potential the bird possesses will be lost, never to be recaptured," Bradford said.

Gains in genetics involved in rate gains have been so phenomenal that Bradford jokingly told producers, "Soon we will be hatching a five-pound bird and we won't need you."

It wasn't that many years ago that it took 15 weeks to grow a seven-pound rooster. Today it takes only six weeks to produce a five-pound bird. This demands more attention to create a healthy environment for the rapidly growing birds, which are more susceptible to temperature stresses.

"Bird genetics cause more



Pat Wood speaks with Jim Shirk about the importance of good public relationships. In her presentation, Wood said, "The future of agriculture is at stake because of public misunderstanding."

water to pass through a bird, which demands more managing of wet litter.

"You can do wonderful things in the house, but if you're not taking moisture out of the

house, you are going to have problems," Barnes said.

Of the ideas given for managing wet litter, Barnes said some sound so, but often are not followed.

"Push it off, and it will cost you," Barnes said of repairs.

In particular is to realize how much "cake" forms from an occasional drip on a faulty pipe. If it isn't managed immediately, it become more expensive and time-consuming later on.

Houses, Barnes said, can be dried out under the coldest conditions when one gets an understanding of basic ventilation. Winter ventilation is just as important as summer.

"Get moisture out, not just moving around," Barnes said. Every 20-degrees rise in air temperature doubles the water capacity holding of air.

"Too many producers don't want to run fans in order to save fuel. That's wrong. You got to get moisture out or you'll just hurt yourself.

"Wet litter management is more than aesthetics. It impacts bird health, bird performance, and bird stress," Barnes said.

Public Relations

The importance of good public relations between producers and consumers continues to grow. Pat Wood, a public consultant for PennAg, detailed consequences to the "do nothing approach" to public's wrong perceptions.

Bad headlines, community problems, additional expense and hassles, additional laws and regulations, and moratoriums are some of the results.

"To communicate better, you need to know how others think," Wood said. People are distrustful of big business, they want environmental problems solved, and economical balances. They are fearful of any health risk associated with food. Consumers are fickle and quesy — they don't want to know where meat comes from.

Wood recommends a two-prong approach when dealing with the public. Communication should be based on substance, not hype, and a broad-based overall strategy to lay the foundation.

"The primary message should be 'we feed your family, we feed the nation, and we feed the world,'" she said

Appeal to the truth: the ag industry is tightly regulated, especially in Pennsylvania. Advanced farms rely on traditional family farms as part of modern models, and are not putting small farms out of business.

The truth includes the following:

- Modern farms enable food to be produced safer and cheaper.
- Land stewardship is a priority.
- Industry uses the best practices.
- Industry is interested in public concerns.
- Farming is a vital contributor to the economy, and the trend toward the modern farm is inevitable.

To reduce problems when attempting to expand the farm, Wood recommends planning before applying for a permit and establishing good rapport with neighbors and local authorities.

Because the media influences public opinion, farmers should get good at media relationships.

"You're doing things right — share what you're doing," Wood said.

The future of agriculture is at stake because of public misunderstanding. Farming techniques should not be required to stand still when other businesses are allowed to grow.

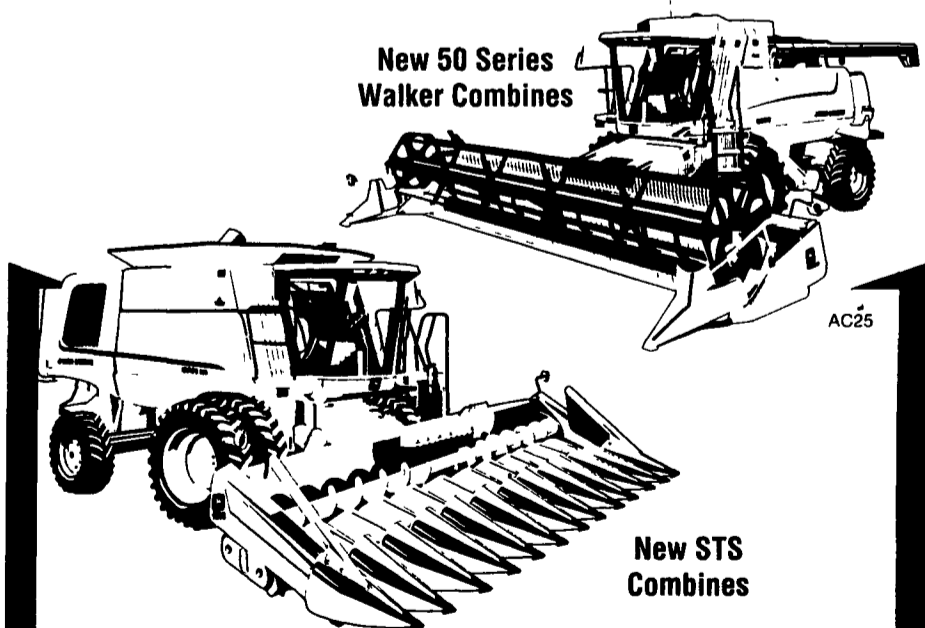
Other topics addressed at the event sponsored by Penn State Cooperative Extension and the Lancaster County Poultry Association included an infectious bronchitis update by Dr. Andre Ziegler, University of Pennsylvania, and an explanation on how the egg is formed by Patterson.



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