



Chairman's Message

Egg Prices

The Prices Commissioner's report is currently under discussion by the Board.

Negotiations have been on-going between the Board's General Manager and the Prices Commissioner for some time resulting at this stage at least in the passing on of feed and cartons costs in the July egg prices adjustment.

Producers should realize this adjustment has taken account of feed and carton costs, the surplus in 61 gram grade and also the need to abide by an agreement not to increase prices during the changeover to the new grades on May 2nd 1988. The change in egg grades was requested by both the Board and producers to better

service the needs of the consumer.

Seasonal Quota Cuts

The recent seasonal hen quota cuts, whilst unpopular, are the only method left to the Board to ensure that no additional surplus eggs go into products which must be subsidized.

Producers will recall during the PBRC hearing that some producer groups attacked the Board on the costs associated with advertising eggs and also the production of egg products. Whilst not offering any real solutions, they have left the Board through the PBRC report in the situation where it is unable to get more funds to advertise and possibly

sell more shell eggs and also unable to collect more levies to offset losses on surplus eggs. In this environment, the Board has no option but to cut seasonal quotas to eliminate any surplus eggs.

In the current depressed climate for egg producers, it was disappointing to see only a few producers present at the W.P.S.A. meeting on June 21st in the Board's Auditorium to hear an interesting talk by Greg Parkinson on increasing profits.

The lecture was the first in a series to help egg producers improve their profits. It is hoped the response is better to the next lecture. Apathy is no answer to the present problems.

Don Foster

Special Lecture Meeting to Help Egg Producers—July 12, 1988

This is the second in a series of three WPSA lectures to help producers operate their farms profitably in what are now much tougher economic conditions.

In the first lecture on Tuesday 21st June, 1988, Dr. Greg Parkinson of the Department of Agriculture stressed the great importance of raising pullets of uniform size and development. He gave evidence of common mistakes in pullet rearing which are costing many producers up to \$2 to \$3 per bird.

In this second lecture Greg Parkinson will summarize these remarks on pullet rearing, then go on to highlight other management practices which can help producers make more money. He will also explain why the Random Sample Laying Test achieves such high performances and how more producers

can exceed this performance on their own farm if they wish to do so.

Dr. Grant Richards, Consultant Poultry Veterinarian will also speak on the subject of what diseases are costing producers, and what practical steps you can take to save money. He will discuss exclusion of disease, disinfection, treatments and vaccination methods.

The night will conclude with the announcement of the final results of the 29th Random Sample Laying Test and the presentation of awards to the leading entrants. Copies of the final report will be provided to those attending.

Details

Date Tuesday 12th July, 1988
Time 7.30 pm

Place Egg Farmers of Victoria,
Keysborough
Cost \$5 (includes refreshments &
notes)

Program

"What Diseases Are Costing You And
What Can You Do About It"

*Dr. Grant Richards, Consultant Poultry
Veterinarian*

"Management Practices To Make You
More Money"

*Dr. Greg Parkinson, Department of
Agriculture*

"Announcement Of 29th RSLT
Results And Presentation Of Awards"

Refreshments and informal
discussion

Further information ring Laurie Miller (03)
651 7893

Victorian Poultry Award

At the recent Poultry and Stockfeed Industry Dinner Award Night at Rembrandts, which was well attended, the recipient of the Victorian Industry Award was Mr. Greg Schumann.

The citation for the Award was:

"After completing his secondary education at Camberwell High School, Greg Schumann commenced a degree course in Agricultural Science at the University of Melbourne.

As a new graduate in 1962, his first job was as a chemist and nutritionist at McLennan's Acme Stock Feed Mill at Mooroopna.

Even as a new comer to the stock feed industry, Greg immediately took an interest in helping the many small egg farmers and turkey farmers who then operated in the Goulburn Valley in the 1960's.

At that early stage, Greg exhibited that intense enthusiasm and optimism which he has displayed throughout his career.

Each year, Greg organised talks and tours of the Acme Feed Mill for the commercial poultry farmers and others who in the 1960's, attended the Department of Agriculture's week long, live-in short poultry courses at the nearby Dookie Agricultural College.

In his role as a technical advisor, one of his early projects was to try to convince the many egg farmers who mixed their own feeds, that there was an advantage in feeding carefully formulated, ready mixed, pelleted rations.

The 1960's and the early 1970's were years of rapid technical development in the poultry industry. The new broiler industry was emerging, intensive housing taking over from deep litter housing, and mechanization of farms was starting.

Greg was involved in Golden Poultry's early broiler industry development. He encouraged the use of the new housing for layers and efficiencies that system brought.

He realized that under intensive conditions, and with improved laying stocks from breeders, it was imperative that rations be properly formulated.

In 1969, three feed companies, W.S. Kimpton (Barastoc), Jas. Miniffie and McLennans merged to form K.M.M. Pty Ltd.

Greg, then Assistant Manager at the McLennan's Mooroopna Mill, was transferred to Melbourne as Marketing Manager for Barastoc Stockfeeds.

At that time, Barastoc operated an Experimental Farm at Lyndhurst, near Dandenong, in which Greg was involved. He encouraged farmers to keep records and to conduct simple, on-farm trials of feeds, and extended the good work of the Barastoc Experimental Farm.

With Barastoc, Greg extended the Company's market by converting many of the new, specialist pig farms to ready mixed, pelleted feeds.

In the 1980's Barastoc by then owned by Barrett Burston was again taken over, this time by Elders IXL. Greg assumed a wider consulting role to embrace Elders interests in other intensive livestock industries. This included cattle feed lots in various states, live sheep export and also Elder's Agricultural interests overseas.

Greg has had considerable overseas experience with business and study trips to the United Kingdom in 1973, the U.S.A. in 1980 and in 1983. He was also involved in technical work in China in 1983.

Since 1984, Greg has been Barastoc's Technical Services

Manager with responsibilities in Feed Formulation, Quality Control and Laboratory Services.

Elders IXL later sold Barastoc to Watties and the Company is now owned by the Goodman Fielder Watties Group. Greg has the unusual distinction of only having had the one job in his entire career but has worked for six different companies.

Greg has been actively involved in the Victorian Stock Feed Manufacturers Association for many years including a Term as its President. He is also a member of the W.P.S.A.

He has always been keen to share his knowledge and to help farmers and he has been a prominent lecturer over many years including W.P.S.A. meetings and at agricultural colleges.

This strong commitment to the stockfeed and poultry industries has not left him much time for many other activities. His other main interests are his family and his church activities.

He is active in the Baptist church and was a youth leader for many years. He has a particular interest in missionary work and is chairman of his church's missionary council.

His many friends in the poultry industry would not be surprised to learn of Greg's interests in missionary work. All would agree that few people have displayed as much missionary zeal for their work in the poultry industry as has Greg Schumann.

Above all, Greg has been enthusiastic, optimistic, cheerful and interested in people and interested in helping people.

Greg Schumann has given outstanding and meritorious service to the Victorian Poultry Industry.

Alan Harrison

Flexible Quota Cuts

Those producers who wish to avail themselves of flexible quota cuts may do so. The flexible quota cut is the system where a producer may take a larger percentage cut for shorter period of time during any time

in the seasonal reduction period. Producers are strongly advised to use this system if they can, particularly during the dates 28/12/88 to 20/2/89, when the Board will be charging a voluntary quota contract

charge of 13 cents/hen/fortnight.

If producers require any assistance with the Flexible Quota Cut Scheme, they should contact Ivan McKinney or Jim Kennett at the Board.

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Bending Curves For Better Egg Quality

Geneticist Hector MacLeod, Ross Breeders Ltd, explains what breeders have to do to improve egg quality.

(World Poultry)

Egg quality for a breeder is part of a multi-trait selection programme. Included in this are weight, the proportion of seconds due to shell damage, shell colour, albumen height (measured in Haugh units) and the so-called 'inclusions'—usually meat and blood spots.

Typically, what happens to four of these traits during a laying period is shown in the graphs. Between 30 and 52 weeks of age they are normally at an acceptable level but thereafter move outside levels of acceptability. It is the breeder's aim to try and straighten out these curves.

The cost to the industry of poor egg quality is enormous, with shell damage representing the greatest loss. Washburn (1982) estimated that the incidence of broken eggs for the UK, Germany and the USA ranged from 6% to 8%.

But this is not the full story—obvious cracks are often removed at the farm, pushing up the total. The nature of modern productions and marketing systems is such that the egg is 'insulted' from the moment it is laid right through the marketing chain to the supermarket stall.

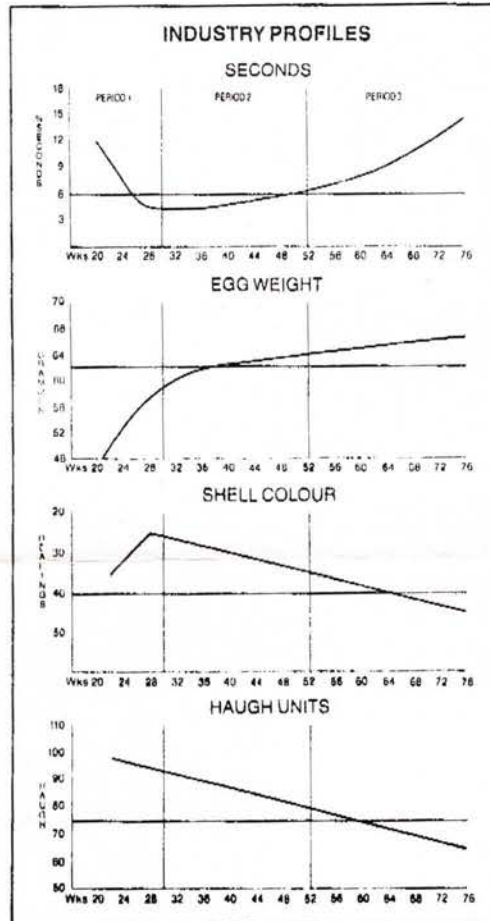
To an extent breeders have had to cope with the additional insult given to eggs with the introduction of automatic collection, while at the same time improving shell strength.

As the first graph shows, percentage seconds initially decrease, then remain relatively flat for a period before rising with age. A level of 5% throughout lay would be acceptable to most producers and the graph highlights the area or periods in a hen's life demanding greatest effort from breeders.

Similarly, an egg weight of 62g-63g, a shell colour reflectometer reading of 30 to 40 and a Haugh unit measurement of 75 all represent a level of acceptability to which breeders strive. The ultimate objective is to superimpose the trait profile on this level of acceptability, although this will probably never be totally achieved.

However, the target must be to bend the profile towards the desired level of acceptability by genetic selection. To do this test criteria must

be established and implemented. These must be scientifically reliable, capable of dealing with relatively large numbers of eggs daily, be conducted in standardised conditions and have acceptable costs.



Shell Quality or resistance to cracking has been measured using various techniques both destructive and non-destructive. The non-destructive techniques such as specific gravity and deformation are, for obvious reasons, more attractive to the commercial breeder.

In general, with a genetic type the thicker the shell the stronger it is. Between genetic types this is not always the case. For example, Hartmann 1980 showed by an analysis of data from W. German random sample trials that although white eggs had thicker shells than brown eggs they had more cracks.

Dr. Solomon, Glasgow Veterinary

School, has demonstrated that shell structure is also an important component of shell strength.

Egg Weight has a relatively high heritability and therefore can be relatively easily altered by the breeder. Thus it is theoretically simple to meet market requirements—assuming that they remain constant for relatively long periods of time.

Short term fluctuations in egg size requirements are not the domain of the geneticist—these can best be met by changes in management practices.

Shell Colour the lower the reflectometer reading the darker the colour. Shell colour has a moderate heritability and in some populations is negatively correlated with other traits. It is very sensitive to environmental influences. Historically, the egg industry has seen many examples of how effective some diseases and drugs can be in turning brown shelled eggs white.

Internal Quality is normally measured as Haugh units. This is a logarithmic relationship between albumen height and egg weight and albumen height is an indicator of freshness. At the production level the age of the bird, age of the egg, storage conditions and some diseases can adversely affect internal quality.

There is considerable genetic variation between and within lines.

Inclusions both blood and meat spots, have a genetic component. The level of both is generally low in white egg strains but the incidence of meat spots in brown eggs is considerable. The response to selection for a low incidence of meat spots declines with the incidence, thus making it practically impossible to eliminate this problem completely.

For several years now Ross Breeders have recognised that improved food quality must also apply to eggs and in recent years increased priority in the breeding programme has been given to egg quality. Results of this are now showing in the field.