

Blood Inside Eggs

by Professor Richard Balander (Michigan State)

As the yolks develop on the hen's ovary, each yolk is contained in a membrane that is made from a large number of blood vessels and is called the *follicle*. On the follicle there is a clear streak called the *stigma*. The stigma normally is clear and does not contain any blood vessels. The stigma is the place on the follicle where it will rupture when it is time for ovulation of that yolk. Occasionally, you will have a blood vessel that crosses the stigma and when this follicle ruptures, the blood vessel is broken and anywhere from a small drop to several large drops of blood are released and "stick" to the yolk. The best thing to do is to just scramble it and you won't even know it was there. It's not going to hurt anything and it's just a little extra protein.

Its cause is not really clear, but it seems to have a genetic component as it can be selected against and has been bred out of most commercial white egg layers. It's easy to candle white eggs and find blood spots and then retire the hen that laid the egg.

Brown egg shells tend to cover up the blood spot when candled and make it much harder to select against unless you break out eggs and actually look for them in the contents of the egg. Golden comets and some of the other commercial brown egg layers have greatly reduced or eliminated this trait in their birds. In other backyard breeds that have not been selected to eliminate this trait, blood inside the egg is not uncommon.

If you have a hen that lays eggs with blood inside, there is probably not much you can do to clear it up.

Beaver Roosts

On the Internet, one lady wrote, "I saw some beavers on the side of the road who were cutting small saplings." Then added, "I collected three of them and made a nice roost for my chickens by drying and nailing them into an 'H' configuration."

Another lady then asked, "That sounds interesting. Could I use dried skunks instead of beavers?"

Midnight Snacks

Researchers at the University of Florida have determined that chickens produce better quality eggs if they are allowed to snack at midnight. The researchers concluded that giving laying hens a feeding at midnight allowed the hen to produce eggs with stronger shells.

Currently, almost 5 percent of all the eggs laid crack before they are packaged because their shells are too thin. Poultry producers in the United States lose about \$100 million annually due to this problem.

Poultry on the Internet

If you are on the internet, you can subscribe to two electronic poultry mailing lists. A mailing list on the internet allows you to publicly post messages for poultry fanciers all over the world to read and to be able to read their messages. Two poultry mailing lists are available. The first is *Poultry News* which is geared toward Poultry Veterinary Science. To subscribe, send an email message to:

LISTSERV@SDSUV.M.SDSTATE.EDU

with the following line in the body of the message:

SUBSCRIBE PLTRYNWS *firstname lastname*

Substituting "*firstname lastname*" with your own first and last name.

The second is *Domestic Birds* which primarily deals with poultry fanciers. To subscribe, send an email message to:

LISTSERV@PLEARN.EDU.PL

with the following line in the body of the message:

SUBSCRIBE DOM_BIRD *firstname lastname*

These are both very interesting groups, and as usual, free to all on the Internet. Contact the PBC Library system for a free Internet account.

The National Egg Quality School

by Kenneth E. Anderson

Individuals who work in inspection, deal with egg quality in the processing plant, or work in the food service area are always looking for training to help them do a better job. The National Egg Quality School is one opportunity to expand your knowledge in the preservation of egg quality for the consumer.

The National Egg Quality School continues a 65 year history in training individuals in egg quality and started with the Eastern and Midwest Egg Quality Schools. This school brings together instructors from across the nation with specialties in areas of egg quality.

For further information contact one of the following organizations for information.

Southern UEP

Box 556

Tucker, GA 30085

Tel: (770) 491-1120

Fax: (770) 491-1145

Indiana Egg Council

Poultry Sci. Bldg.

W. Lafayette, IN 47907

Tel: (317) 494-8510

Fax: (317) 494-6349

Annual Club Poultry Show

The Annual Club Poultry Show will be held at the next meeting. Dr. Dale Porcher will be judging. Bring your best birds and your own cages. Limit 6 chickens per family.

Feather Eating

by James Barton, DVM

Feather eating has been attributed to a sulfur amino acid deficiency (methionine and cystine). Some would suggest a water soluble methionine supplement such as ZinPro. Cockerels have higher nutrient requirements than pullets because they grow more quickly. Adding some ZinPro to their water should help reduce feather eating.

Molting

A chicken will molt when the physiologic and environmental factors are "correct" for that chicken. Temperature plays little if any role in stimulating molting. Duration of light is a more important factor in stimulating molting in commercial layers. If you have not kept your birds on 14 hours of light per day during the Fall and Winter, you should expect to get fewer eggs and molting chickens. Hens can stop laying eggs and molt unexpectedly. Commercial egg farmers induce molting in hens to synchronize molting in the whole flock. This gives the hens a rest from laying and allows the farmers to plan for another source of eggs while the flock is molting. After molting, hens return to lay in about six or seven weeks and have a set of new feathers.

Synchronizing molt in commercial flocks is often accomplished by reducing lighting to six or eight hours per day and fasting.

If your hen seems healthy, you should not be concerned about molting. Molting at one year of age is normal. If you are not using artificial lighting your hen should start laying again in the Spring as daylight approaches 14 hours.

Club News

At the September meeting, the club voted to increase the selling price of baby chicks at the fair from \$2.00 each to \$3.00 each. This represents the first price increase in over ten years. Because the club pays \$1.00 per chick, this will double the club's profit if our sales volume remains the same at the next fair. The selling price of ducks is expected to remain at \$5.00.

Election Results

The officers of the club were elected at our September meeting. The winning candidates were Lee Salmon for President, Richard Okerson for Vice-president, Arvis Okerson for Secretary, and Rose Greggs as Treasurer. Congratulations to our officers in their victory.

Chicken Vision

by Dr. Nickolas G. Zimmermann, University of MD

Chicken visual acuity to various colors of light is very different from that of humans. People have peak acuity in Yellow-Orange light whereas chickens peak in Orange-Red light. This suggests that chickens see red better than blue. We do know that Red light is more effective than blue and green light in stimulating hens to lay. Also, chickens can "see" in a much broader range of colors than we can. They have the ability to "see" in pure Ultra-Violet light but we can't.

Special Invitation to the "Mystery Party Duck"

You are cordially invited to our Annual Club Poultry Show on October 25, 1996, at 8:00 pm. Come on out and enjoy the fun!

Editor's Note: The editor has agreed to print the Mystery Duck's Manifesto in the next edition of the newsletter if the duck can make the deadline.

Hens That Lay Two Eggs Every Day

Dr. Jim Bitgood of the University of Wisconsin has developed a line of double oviduct chickens. They have been around for about 20 years and there are several publications on them. It has been shown that if the second oviduct is complete, it can function normally thus producing two eggs per hen per day. Normal hens do not produce more than one egg per day.

Dr. Bitgood stated "The birds we have developed have extremely variable amounts of the second oviduct. If this is a genetic condition, it is extremely variable, and it probably would not be economically feasible to pursue." The double oviduct hens don't start laying eggs until they are about ten months of age.

Poultry Show in January

The South Florida Fair is just around the corner. The fair runs from January 17, 1997 to February 2, 1997. As usual, the club will be hosting the Poultry Show. If you are an exhibitor, you will need to get your birds to the fair on the 16th before the fair opens. You are allowed to enter up to 30 birds that can occupy no more than 15 cages. Our judges this year will be Emmette Rachels and Rip Stalvey.

The story of Brewster

There was this farmer whose hens had stopped laying eggs because they weren't happy. Well, he found a man who offered to sell him a rooster that would make his hens happy and increase production. The price was \$150.00, but came with a money-back guarantee. Now this farmer was skeptical because he had already spent \$100.00 on the previous rooster that wasn't making his hens happy. Anyhow, he gambled and bought the new rooster who was named Brewster.

Well, he got Brewster home and threw him in the henhouse. There was all this cackling and squawking, and the farmer thought, "Poor Brewster, the hens are going to kill him."

He comes back to the henhouse a little while later and everything is quiet. Inside, all the hens are happy and fast asleep. Suddenly, he hears a terrible noise out in the barn. To his surprise, when he opened the barn doors, there was Brewster with all the cows. He was trying his best to make them happy as well! "Brewster, you're going to kill yourself!", the farmer said, but Brewster didn't pay any attention.

Well, the farmer had some more work to do, so he left him there. A couple of hours later, the farmer returned, and the cows were all happy and fast asleep! Then he heard some strange sounds coming from behind the barn. He rushed to see what the matter was and sure enough, it was Brewster. He had all the pigs lined up, and he was still going strong! The farmer cried "BREWSTER! You're Going To Kill Yourself!!!" And with that he tried to get him to stop, but Brewster wouldn't quit.

The next morning, the farmer came out into the yard only to trip over his happy and sleeping dog. After finding all the other animals in the same condition, he started looking for Brewster.

But Brewster was nowhere to be found. Finally, out in the fields, he found him lying on his back, both legs in the air, tongue dried and hanging out, one eye open and glassy, one wing over his chest, and the other splayed out on the ground with vultures circling overhead.

The farmer said "Brewster, if I told you once, I told you a million times, You were going to kill yourself, and now look at you!!!"

Brewster slowly opened up his other eye, pointed up to the vultures with his wing and whispered softly, "Shhhh. I think one's about to land."

Attention Members

You may be the Lucky winner of **FREE** South Florida Fair passes. To find out if you qualify for this exciting event be sure to attend the next three meetings of the Palm Beach County Poultry Fanciers Association.

Mini Membership Application

Send your name, address, telephone number, and dues to:

Rose Greggs, PBCPFA Treasurer
8643 El Paso Dr.
Lake Worth, FL 33467-1109

Include the names and ages of your children (if any). The dues for the PBCPFA club are \$12 for families and \$8 for individuals and run from January 1 to December 31. New members joining after June 31 are eligible for an initial half price rate. For existing members, all renewals are due December 31 and are for one year.

Refreshments served and a raffle at every meeting!

Egg Checks

by Sally Jaeggli, Montana 4-H Foundation

Sometimes when an egg shell is forming inside a hen and is not totally calcified, the bird will jump etc, crack the egg, and then more calcium is laid on. This produces a line on the shell, thinner in the middle. This is known as a "body check" because it is a check (crack) which occurs within the hen's body. Body checks are common in eggs from free ranging hens which have access to high places, roosts etc.

Classified

FOR SALE:

PBCPFA T-Shirts, excellent quality, beautiful logo. Small, Medium, Large, and X-Large sizes are available for \$10.00 (members), \$12.00 (non-members). Contact Richard Greggs (561) 433-8157. Don't be chicken, get yours today.

Baseball caps with our PBCPFA logo on them. They look fantastic and sell for a low \$5.00! Contact Richard Greggs (561) 433-8157.

FOR LOAN OR RENT:

Don't let your flock fall victim to predators! The poultry club owns a trap that members may use free of charge. Your neighbors may rent the trap for a small fee. To reserve your time to use the trap, contact Richard Greggs (561) 433-8157.

WANTED:

Newsletter articles for the PBCPFA newsletter. The deadline is the fourth Friday of the previous month. Submit articles to the editor by mail, email, or in person at the meeting.