



A Monthly e Magazine
ISSN:2583-2212
Dec 2023 3(12) 4071-4073

Popular Article

Poultry Management Strategies Adopted During the Winter Season

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10275639>

Introduction

Poultry production is a rapidly expanding sector within the global agriculture industry. Poultry farming during the cold season presents various challenges, including reduced daylight hours that significantly impact chicken consumption habits, increased humidity levels, and heightened susceptibility to infections. These are only a few examples of the consequences observed in this context. The cold season is characterized by various notable changes, including a decline in egg production, the onset of illnesses, increased production costs, and elevated feed consumption. The subsequent procedures are to be implemented to address and resolve the issues.

1. The length of the day getting shorter (photoperiod)

During the winter season, there is a decrease in the duration of sunlight. This reduction in daylight has an impact on the reproductive behavior of birds, as their egg-laying activity is influenced by the length of the day. Specifically, longer days and increasing daylight stimulate egg production in laying birds and generally enhance their feed consumption. To ensure optimal production, laying chickens typically require approximately 16 hours of daylight.

However, during the cold season, the availability of natural daylight is diminished, which can negatively affect egg production. To address this issue, a viable solution is to provide artificial light using fluorescent bulbs that simulate natural daylight. By doing so, the production of laying birds can be effectively maintained without disruption.



2. Young birds are far more susceptible to the cold

During the winter season, ensuring the appropriate brooding temperature for chicks is a significant responsibility that must be executed accurately to mitigate the risk of excessive chick mortality. A high temperature is necessary for the process of yolk digestion in chicks, whereby the maternal yolk contained within the chicks' bodies is broken down. Failure to maintain appropriate heat levels can result in the mortality of young poultry, primarily owing to complications such as yolk indigestion, yolk infection, hurdling, and exposure to cold temperatures.

3. Chickens alter their feeding behaviour

Avian foraging behaviour Habitual and dietary requirements undergo alterations in response to cooler climatic conditions. During periods of cold weather, birds engage in heightened behaviour, such as huddling together, in an effort to generate internal heat and sustain their warmth and energy levels. One of the most straightforward methods to provide the chicken with a high-energy poultry feed is by incorporating a suitable quantity of chlorine chloride. Birds exhibit an increased consumption of feed during colder seasons to meet their energy demands. To mitigate the impact of cold weather, additional energy is necessary. The feed formulation should be modified in order to align with the energy requirements of avian species.

4. Moulting takes place in the winter

Moulting is a natural process in which birds replace their old feathers with new ones, facilitating growth. This phenomenon typically occurs during periods of reduced daylight and lower temperatures. During this phase, avian species commonly cease their egg-laying activities and utilize this time to accumulate and replenish their nutrient reserves. This process is observed as a preparatory phase that occurs prior to the eventual decrease in laying potential. In order to address the issue at present, it is imperative to ensure that adequate lighting is provided, with the maintenance of appropriate temperature levels and the provision of correct nourishment.

5. Water management

During the winter season, bird's exhibit reduced water intake as a means of conserving water within their bodies. Therefore, it is crucial to provide a consistent source of fresh water that is accessible to birds. The provision of poultry drinking water necessitates adherence to standards of normalcy and cleanliness, as well as the implementation of appropriate sanitization measures. If the water is too cold, it is advisable to provide it to the chicken after adding hot water, allowing it to reach a normal temperature. During the winter season, avian species exhibit reduced water consumption. Consequently, it is recommended to administer various immunizations, prescription medications, as well as anti-stress vitamins and immune boosters to poultry via water intake.



Hence, it is imperative to ascertain the removal of water several hours prior to water medication, and to deliver the solution or immunization in reduced quantities to facilitate complete consumption by the avian population.

6. Ventilation

In the winter season, it is imperative to ensure that the hose remains free from draughts while maintaining adequate ventilation. Birds emit a significant amount of moisture through their respiration and faeces, which can have detrimental effects on their health. In situations where ventilation is limited, the accumulation of ammonia in the air can lead to respiratory issues. It is imperative to have adequate ventilation within the household, so facilitating the circulation of fresh air. Sliding windows are advantageous due to their ability to be opened during the day and closed during the night. In addition, it is recommended to implement a system for the installation of exhaust fans to effectively eliminate contaminated air.

7. Mud balls on chicken feet

The practice described is frequently observed in the deep litter shed system, wherein birds are raised in a free-range environment that allows them to freely roam on the floor surface. The presence of soil and manure adheres to the claws and toes of birds due to their scratching activity. When permitted to increase in size, they have the potential to alter the upright stance of avian species, leading to the occurrence of fractured digits. The maintenance of a clean and dry floor is essential and can be achieved by utilizing appropriate bedding material. The issue of nipple leakage necessitates remedial intervention. Frequent washing and replacement of bedding material can effectively mitigate the transmission of diseases and the proliferation of mud-borne infections.

