

info

Flock Management – The “FLAWS” System

In today's economic climate, managers and supervisors are pressed more than ever to be as efficient as possible. This includes efficient use of time. Due to increased time demands managers often exit a barn without having really paid close attention to that particular flock. Dead birds get picked up, drinkers raised and bedding put down in a routine manner; often without thinking about what's happening to the birds or within the barn.

Consequently, it is a good exercise each and every time managers are in a barn to run through a mental “checklist” and look for the “F-L-A-W-S”. When you leave the barn a manager should be able to comment on the feed, flock, light, litter, air, water, security and sanitation and have answers for the following questions.

F L A W S

Feed Flock Light Litter Air Water Security Sanitation

Feed

- Is the pellet or crumb quality acceptable?
- Are feed samples being retained, labeled and stored in a cool rodent proof location until the flock is marketed?

- Is this the correct feed for the age of the flock?
- Is feed being ordered on a timely basis? Storage of starter feeds for more than 10 days will contribute to rickets.
- Are feedlines at the correct height? Is feed being spilled? Use only feeders that are bird compatible and eliminate wastage. Feed depth of ½" (1.2 cm) is sufficient during the growing stage and prevents wastage.
- Is feed being withdrawn correctly prior to marketing?

Flock

- Is the flock meeting the breed standards?
- What is the average weight and coefficient of variation (CV) this week?
- Are there any signs of disease? Snick, cough, loose droppings?
- Is the flock active and alert?
- What density is the flock at?

Light

- Is the light intensity bright enough to promote activity? Inactive birds will not develop good leg strength. Hybrid recommends starting with 24 hours of bright lights: 8-10 foot candle power (80-100 lux) and gradually reduce to 60% intensity and 16 hours day length by the seventh day. A minimum of 3 foot candle power (30 lux) will maintain activity. Light which is too

Hybrid Turkeys
Head Office
650 Riverbend Drive
Suite C
Kitchener, ON N2K 3S2
Canada
Tel. 519-578-2740
Fax 519-578-1870
E-Mail:
info@hybridturkeys.com

Hybrid Turkeys
European Office
P.O. Box 30
5830 AA Boxmeer
The Netherlands
Telephone +31 485 589922
Fax +31 485 575205
E-Mail: euribrid@e-mail.com



bright or too dim can contribute to eye problems.

- Is the lighting time clock working properly?

Litter

- Is the litter quality good? Are there rings around the drinkers?
- Is the litter being tilled?
- Are the footpads clean? Birds with footpad lesions will be in pain and inactive which contributes to leg problems later.
- Is there any evidence of water spills or moldy litter?

Air

- Is the barn environment comfortable at bird level?
- Is the temperature correct for the age of the flock?
- Is the air fresh and clear? Exchange enough air to supply oxygen, remove moisture, carbon dioxide, ammonia and dust. Fans should run at least 10% of their capacity even on the coldest days. Total confinement capacity of 1.5 CFM per lb. of body weight (4.5 m³/kg/hour) should be available. Circulation fans will add to bird comfort in extremely hot weather.

Water

- Is the water consumption normal for the age of flock and time of year?
- Are water meter records being used and being kept up to date?
- Have there been any changes in water consumption since the previous day? A change in water consumption is a good indicator of potential problems.
- Are the drinkers clean? Is the correct amount of sanitizer present in the drinker? Chlorine levels should be checked weekly to ensure that the last drinker in the waterline has 2-3 ppm in it. When was the water quality last checked for bacterial levels and minerals?

- Are all drinkers working properly with minimal spillage?

- Is the type of drinker correct for the age of the flock?

Security/Sanitation

- Is there evidence of rodents, darkling beetles or wild birds in the barn? Did you specifically check likely hiding spots or access points?
- Are there any feed spills under the feedbin?
- Are rodent bait stations in place with dry bait inside?
- Are there any dead birds sitting outside the barn?
- Were facilities adequate for disinfecting or changing footwear prior to entering the barn? Were clean coveralls and hair bonnets available to change into?
- Do you know who has entered the barn beside yourself?

A healthy secure environment will minimize the need for vaccinations.

Conclusion

With today's management demands, the FLAWS checklist is a good, back to basics approach. It provides a quick mental review that what we say we are doing is what is actually happening in the barn. It will also help to detect problems early and correct them quickly. The turkey can not change its environment, it can only react to it. Therefore, it is our responsibility each day to ensure that the conditions we provide our flocks are optimal.

© Hybrid Turkeys

Unless otherwise specified, the information provided here is the property of Hybrid Turkeys. Before reproducing or publishing this material in any manner, please obtain approval by calling Hybrid Turkeys' head office in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada at +1-519-578-2740.