B. Broilers and Capons

1. What is the cause of breast blisters in poultry?

Breast blisters are usually more of a management problem than an infectious disease problem. Blisters usually occur in large birds such as cockerels, tom turkeys, broilers, and roasting chickens that spend much time resting on their keel bones. Wet litter or soil, presence of sharp objects such as stickers, thorns, or wire where the bird's roost, presence of leg problems which cause the birds to spend much time resting, and selection for large body size without a similar emphasis on development of strong legs contribute to the problem.

The best preventative measure is to remove the source of irritation and feed a ration that will promote development of strong legs - Ref. H. Nutrition, "KSU rations."

2. What causes lameness in chickens, particularly meat-type or broiler chickens?

If the hock joint is swollen and warm to the touch there may be an infection called infectious synovitis. A treatment is 15 gm of penicillin and 75 gm of streptomycin (Streptomycin F-25) or 100gm of zinc bacitracin per ton of feed. A more common cause is inadequate nutrition - Ref. B. Broilers and Capons – "Leg Problems in Meat-Type Chickens." Certainly, genetics may also be a cause.

3. What are caponizing "slips?"

Slips are males in which some testicular tissue was left during the caponizing operation. Even a minute amount of testicular material has the ability to secrete sufficient male sex hormone to give the bird the general characteristics of an intact male. The length of time before slip characteristics develop will depend on the amount of testicular tissue left in the bird. Slips are intermediate between capons and cockerels in their ability to put on fat and their carcass quality. They should be disposed of as soon as they appear in the flock.

4. What are "chemical capons" or "hormonized" birds?

These are cockerels implanted with a synthetic female sex hormone. This product causes the same changes to take place in a male bird as surgical caponizing, thus the reason for the name "chemical caponizing."