

F. Management Practices

1. What is the objective of dubbing the combs and wattles of chickens?

Dubbing (cutting off combs and wattles) of chickens prevents damage from freezing and fighting. The comb may be removed at day-old, but it is less difficult to remove the wattles if you wait until the birds are 4-6 weeks of age. Using a sharp pair of scissors, clip the comb as close to the head as possible, following the curvature of the head.

Adult birds may be dubbed between 5 and 18 weeks of age. Clip the comb with dull scissors or tin snips half way between the skull and the base of the points on the comb. Do not dub during times of stress, such as hot weather, disease outbreaks, etc.

2. What causes poultry to pick (cannibalize) each other?

Cannibalism (picking) can occur at any age. The cause is not fully understood. The stresses of crowding, too much light, an unbalanced diet, poor ventilation, injury, and sickness may cause birds to pick each other. Ref. G. Management Practices. "Controlling Cannibalism in Poultry" for methods of prevention.

3. What is the cause of chicks becoming dehydrated and dying 3-5 days after placing on feed and water?

The most likely cause is "starveouts." These are chicks that never consume feed and/or water and die from starvation and dehydration. Major causes are poor lighting, too long of an interval from hatching to placing in the brooder house. It is best to place chicks within 22 hours after hatch, poor quality chicks, and not enough feeders and waterers. We recommend dipping a few chick's beaks in the water when they are placed in the pen.

4. How can birds be prevented from flying?

There are three methods: 1) Clip the flight feathers of one wing with hedge clippers. This will last until the birds molt and grow in new feathers; 2) Sever the tendon in the outer most wing joint with a hot blade or wire at day-old; and 3) Cut-off the tip of one wing at day-old. The last two methods are permanent, and I recommend #1 , or building a covered pen so the birds won't get out.

5. How many males should there be in a breeder flock?

<u>Type</u>	<u>Hens Per Male</u>
Light breeds (Leghorn)	15-20
Dual purpose breeds i.e. New Hampshire Reds	10-15
Meal-type, i.e. Rock-Cornish	8-12
Ducks	6-8

Geese	Mate best in trios
Turkeys	10-18

6. How can you prevent chicks and pouts from eating litter?

Cover the litter inside the brooder ring with paper for the first 3-5 days. Don't use slick paper for turkeys as it will cause spraddled legs.

7. Is it advisable to grow chickens and turkeys together?

Under most conditions, NO, because chickens are passive carriers of a disease called blackhead, which they transmit to turkeys, which are very susceptible. Ref. O. Sanitation and Disease, "A Manual of Poultry Diseases", p. 35.

8. How long after males have been switched in a flock should one wait before saving eggs to assure that all of the progeny will be from the new males?

We recommend waiting 21 days. Maximum fertility should be reached within 7 days after males are originally introduced into the flock for the first time.

9. How much chicken manure can be spread on land and how valuable is it as fertilizer?

It is advisable to obtain a representative sample of the manure and have it analyzed for N-P-K, because the N-P-K content can vary widely between sources. Average values for dry manure (less than 35% water) are 3.2% nitrogen, 1.7% phosphorous, and 1.2% potassium. The type of soil and the nutrient content of the manure influence the spreading rate. A general guideline is 20 tons per acre (wet weight) per year or the annual volume from 450 hens, 590 pullets, 690 broilers, or 300 market turkeys.

10. How much manure is produced by poultry?

Use the following as a guide:

<u>Species</u>	<u>Amount/bird/day</u>		<u>Lb/1000</u>	<u>Birds/cycle</u>
	(ft ³)	(lb)	(wet)	(dry)
Hen (4 lb.)	.0035	.27	105	25
Pullet (0-20 weeks)	.0023	.17	24	6
Broiler (0-8 weeks)	.0020	.18	10	2.8
Turkey (0-22 weeks)	.0055	.80	130	32

11. How long after hatching can chicks be held until they are given food and water?

Chicks can live on the yolk material in their bodies for up to 72 hours after hatching. This is why day-old chicks can be shipped around the world without added feed and water. However, for best results give them food and water as soon as possible after hatching.

12. What causes crippled chicks?

Common causes are too high incubator temperature, poor breeder hen nutrition, and abnormalities during development. A slick floor in the incubator may also cause cripples.

13. Should turkeys be toe clipped?

It is a common practice to clip the two inside toes of market turkeys at day-old. It prevents scratched and torn backs. Toe clipping breeder males that will be used in natural matings will prevent damage to the females during mating.

14. What causes birds to have loose "watery" droppings?

A common cause is too much salt in the feed and/or water. Poultry can tolerate up to 2% salt in the feed without adverse effects. From 2 to 3.5% will increase the moisture content of the manure and above 3.5% will adversely affect productivity. Between 2500 and 3000 ppm of salt in the water will increase the moisture content of the manure and above 3000 ppm will affect both manure moisture content and productivity. Have the feed and water tested for total salt content if salt is the suspected cause of the problem. If the water has a high salt content, reduce the salt content of the feed. It is a common practice to add .5% salt to poultry rations.

Other causes of watery droppings are slime buildup in the water lines and waterers, particularly during warm weather. Certain mold organisms will infect the birds digestive tract and cause excretion of excess fluid. Prevent this by frequent cleaning of the water lines and waterers with a suitable sanitizer such as quaternary ammonium compounds. Another cause is hot weather. During heat stress birds will excrete excess water as a means of disposing of excess heat.