Tips and Guidelines to Promote the Proper Development of Layers

Part II

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POULTRY EQUIPMENT

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INTRODUCTION

At Zucami, as an integral part of our commitment to animal welfare, we are dedicated to ensuring the health and comfort of birds with our facilities.

In the first part of the article we talked about some key aspects to implement different techniques and features of a good and proper management in laying hens; however, in this second part, we will address in detail each of these aspects giving tips that can help to improve their production.

Firstly, proper hen development is essential to ensure hen health and welfare, as well as productivity and profitability in poultry production.

Below are several critical aspects that must be considered to promote optimal hen development, including feeding programme, flock uniformity, weight assessment, temperature, bird density, light programme and beak trimming.

1 Food Programme

A well-designed feeding programme is essential for the growth and development of the hens. The diet must be balanced and contain all the necessary nutrients in the right amounts. This includes proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins and minerals.

Growth stages:

The nutritional needs of hens change throughout their lives and it is crucial to adjust the diet according to the stage of development, whether it is the rearing, growing or egg production phase. During the rearing phase, a higher amount of protein is needed for proper muscle growth, and during the egg production stage, the calcium content must be increased to ensure the formation of strong eggshells.

Feed quality:

Using high quality ingredients and ensuring feed freshness is vital. Stale or contaminated feed can negatively affect the health of the hens. In addition, grinding and mixing of the feed must be carried out accurately to avoid separation of ingredients, thus ensuring that the hens receive a homogenous diet.

Supplements and additives:

In some cases, vitamin or mineral supplements may be necessary to correct specific deficiencies. In addition, additives such as probiotics and prebiotics can improve gut health and overall performance. Probiotics help maintain a healthy balance of bacteria in the gut, while prebiotics serve as food for these beneficial bacteria, improving digestion and nutrient absorption.

Frequency of feeding:

Frequency and method of feeding are also important aspects. Providing feed regularly and in adequate quantities prevents wastage and ensures that all hens have equal access to nutrients. Using automatic feeding systems can optimise distribution and reduce stress among the birds.

Monitoring and adjustments:

It is essential to constantly monitor feed intake and the physical condition of the hens. Assessing weight, body condition and egg production allows adjustments to be made to the diet to ensure that nutritional needs are being met at each stage, and attention should be paid to any signs of health problems that may be related to feed, such as changes in feathering, behaviour or egg production.

Quality water:

Water is a critical component of the feeding programme. Ensuring a constant supply of clean, fresh water is essential for the well-being and productivity of the hens. Water should be free of contaminants and water consumption should be monitored regularly, as any change may indicate health or feed problems.

Specific feeding strategies:

Implementing specific feeding strategies can be beneficial. For example, precision feeding, which adjusts feed rations according to the individual needs of the birds, can improve feed efficiency and reduce costs. Also, phase feeding allows the diet to be tailored more precisely to nutritional requirements at different stages of production.

2 Flock Uniformity

Flock uniformity is essential for efficient and productive hen management. A uniform flock facilitates the implementation of management and nutrition programmes.

• Selection and grading:

From the outset, it is important to select birds of similar size and weight. Sorting birds according to size helps to ensure that all birds receive equal access to feed and water.

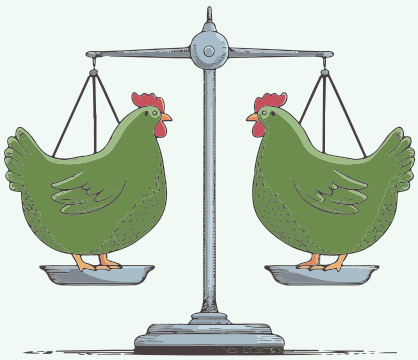
• Controlling access to feed:

Ensuring that all birds have equal access to feed is crucial. This can be achieved through proper design of the feeding system and the use of sufficient and well-distributed feeders.distribuidos.

3 Weight Evaluation

Assessing hen weights is an essential practice to ensure proper development and maintain flock uniformity. Regular weight monitoring allows you to detect developmental problems early and adjust management as necessary to ensure that all birds grow optimally.

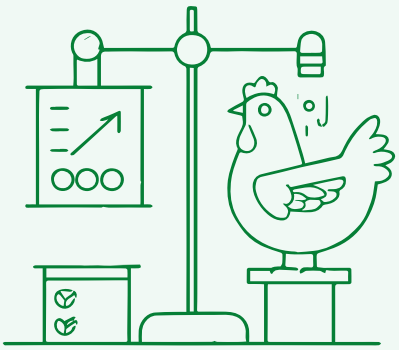
Regular weighing: Weekly weighing is a recommended practice in poultry farming. This systematic procedure helps to detect any deviations in the growth of the hens at an early stage. Regular weighing allows poultry farmers to identify potential problems, such as underfeeding or overfeeding, diseases or environmental problems, and to take timely corrective action before they significantly affect the health and performance of the birds.



Weighing methods: The weighing method may vary depending on the facility and batch size. Digital or mechanical scales can be used, always ensuring that they are accurate and calibrated. It is important to weigh a representative sample of birds at different points in the house to obtain accurate data. In addition, the time of day for weighing should be considered, preferably at the same time each time, to minimise variations caused by feed and water consumption.

Data recording and analysis:

Keeping detailed records of weights is crucial for long-term analysis. Records should include date, average sample weight, weight range, and any relevant observations on bird condition or environmental conditions. This historical data allows poultry producers to analyse growth trends over time, identify patterns and correlations, and make informed adjustments to the feeding and management programme.



Interpretation of data:

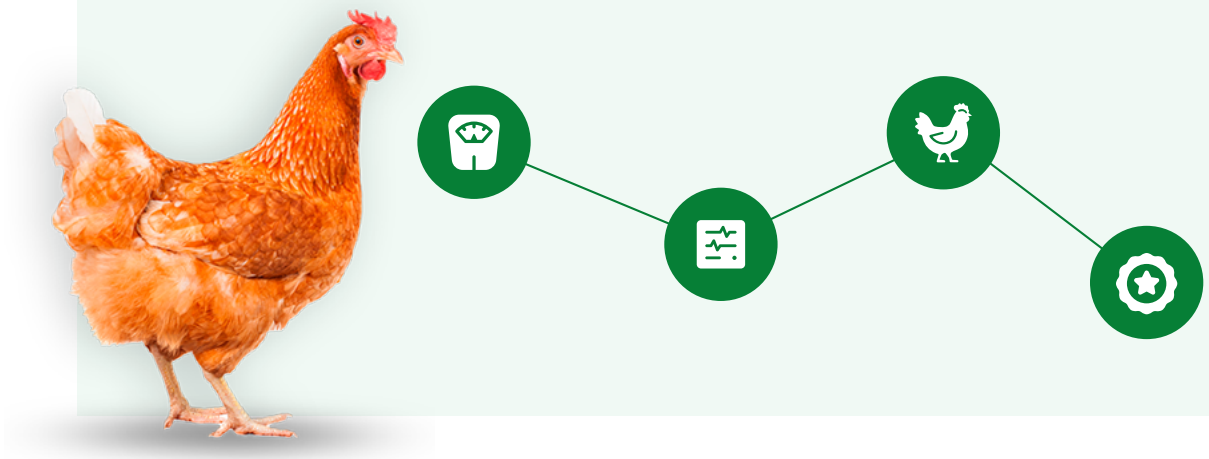
Analysing weight data involves comparing the results obtained with the expected growth standards for the breed and age of the hens. Significant deviations may indicate health problems, improper management or nutritional deficiencies. It is essential to work with a poultry nutritionist or veterinarian to interpret the data correctly and design appropriate intervetion stratgies.

Management and feeding adjustments:

Based on the results of the weight analysis, adjustments can be made to the feeding programme, ensuring that the birds receive a balanced diet that meets their nutritional needs. Changes can also be made to environmental management, such as improving ventilation, regulating temperature, and optimising bird density in the house to promote uniform and healthy growth.

Importance of weighing at different stages:

Weighing is particularly crucial at key stages of hen development, such as the rearing period and the onset of lay. During these phases, proper growth is critical to the development of the reproductive system and future egg production. Monitoring weight during these periods allows poultry producers to ensure that hens are on the right track to reach their maximum productive potential.



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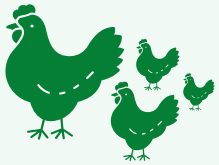
Temperature:

Temperature is a critical factor affecting the welfare and development of hens. A suitable thermal environment is essential for growth and productivity.

- **Temperature control:**
  Use heating and ventilation systems to maintain an appropriate temperature in the poultry house. Temperature should be adjusted according to the age and physiological state of the birds.

- **Constant monitoring:**
  Implement temperature monitoring systems to detect and correct deviations in a timely manner. This includes the use of thermometers and sensors in different areas of the ship.

To achieve the best results, today's poultry production systems require maximum control and information through effective working tools. **ZUCAMI's** Control and Management Systems bring together different ways of maximising poultry production through an easy-to-use, convenient and fast controller. So we can control each poultry facility with maximum information and guaranteeing all the daily needs of the birds.



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Stocking density:

The stocking density in the house has a significant impact on the development and welfare of the hens.

Adequate space:
Providing sufficient space for each bird is crucial to prevent stress and disease. Recommended stocking densities vary according to the production system, but in general, high concentrations of birds should be avoided.

House design:
A well-planned house design, with proper arrangement of feeders, drinkers and resting areas, helps to maintain adequate stocking density and reduces competition for resources.

Zucami has a variety of equipment such as the Green Way aviary for layers, the Vision aviary for layers and the Green Start aviary for rearing, which allows a correct temperature flow and facilitates good growth and productivity of the birds.

6

Lighting programme

Lighting influences various aspects of hen behaviour and physiology, including growth, egg production and general welfare.

Photoperiod:
Establish an appropriate light schedule that simulates natural conditions. During the growth phase, light hours should be sufficient to promote activity and feed intake, but not excessive to avoid stress.

Light intensity and quality:
Use appropriate light intensity and avoid sudden changes in lighting. The quality of light (spectrum) can also influence bird behaviour.

7

Beak trimming

Beak trimming is a common practice to prevent pecking and cannibalism among hens. However, it must be done properly to minimise stress and pain in the birds.

Appropriate methods and equipment:

Use modern and well-maintained equipment for beak trimming. Methods such as thermal cutting or the use of lasers can be less painful and more accurate.

Staff training:

Ensure that staff are well trained in beak trimming techniques. Proper execution reduces the risk of complications and promotes bird welfare.

Conclusion

Proper hen development depends on a combination of factors including balanced nutrition, maintenance of a suitable environment, and careful management practices.

Implementing a well-designed feeding programme, monitoring flock uniformity and bird weight, controlling temperature and density, establishing an appropriate lighting programme, and proper beak trimming are essential to ensure the welfare and productivity of the hens.

By following these tips, poultry producers can optimise the growth and development of their birds, ensuring both the profitability and sustainability of their operation.

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