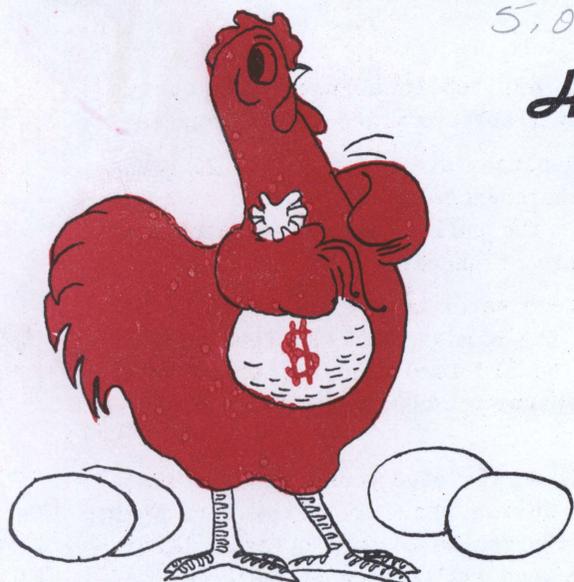


Mrs. Dot Halland  
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## Helping Your Hens to Greater Profits



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HIGH PRODUCTION, long period of lay, low death loss and good feed efficiency are important to the present-day egg producer. Neglect one of these and the profit will be lowered. The modern hen is bred to lay at a high rate, but skillful management must be practiced to gain maximum profits.

### GENERAL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

1. Only healthy pullets should go into the laying house. Remove sick and crippled birds.

2. Give pullets ample ventilation if they are range reared birds since they are accustomed to fresh air.

3. Fourteen hours of light a day increases egg production by stimulating a gland which in turn secretes a hormone causing the ovaries to speed up production. Install a 60-watt light 6 feet above the floor for every 200 square feet of floor area.

4. Follow the feed manufacturer's directions pertaining to feeding the laying flock. Purchase a feed with sufficient calcium so no oyster shell is needed.

5. Cull sick or injured birds for 4 or 5 months after birds are in production.

6. At the first signs of cannibalism or feather picking, debeak the birds. To debeak an adult bird cut off one-third of the upper beak with an electric debeaker or knife. The electric debeaker is best since it sears the beak and prevents bleeding.

7. If a disease appears, a reliable diagnosis should be made promptly by a veterinarian or diagnostic laboratory. Treat the birds according to the recommendation.

8. Carefully check some birds each week for external parasites, and if found, begin treatment at once. See Extension Service L-256, *Texas Guide for Controlling External Parasites of Livestock and Poultry*.

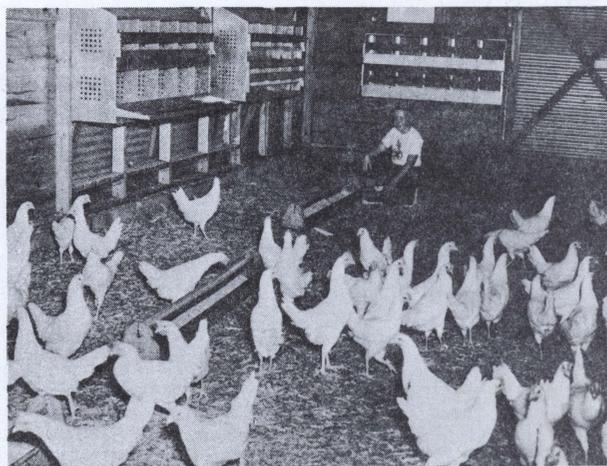
9. Dispose of dead birds by completely burning or using a disposal pit. A disposal pit is a necessity on poultry farms. Plans for a disposal pit are available from your county extension agents.

10. Gather eggs at least three times a day to help preserve egg quality. Heat lowers egg quality in a few hours. When possible, store eggs at 55 degrees F.

11. Records are so important that an operation may fail without them. A producer needs to know the current feed cost, replacement cost, mortality, egg production, culls and cost per dozen eggs. After records are kept, they might be analyzed thoroughly to capture their usefulness.

### FLOOR OPERATION

Sanitation must be practiced in a floor operation. The best prevention against diseases



For floor egg production allow 3 square feet of floor space, one nest for four birds, 3 inches of feed space and 1 inch of water space.

and parasites is clean and sanitary living conditions.

1. Clean, disinfect and leave the house open about a week between broods of birds.

2. Use about 3 inches of litter on the floor. Recommended litters are cane fiber, wood shavings, crushed corn cobs and peanut hulls. Stir the litter once a week to keep it dry and loose.

3. Each bird needs 3 square feet of floor space. Crowding the birds encourages cannibalism, feather picking, increases heat in summer and lowers egg production.

4. Do not put young pullets in the house with old hens. Diseases and parasites may spread from the old birds to the young.

5. Provide 4 to 6 inches of feeder space to lower competition between birds and to keep up egg production.

6. One inch of water space per bird is important in furnishing the laying hen with sufficient water. Water increases feed efficiency, egg production and assists in regulating the body temperature.

7. Furnish one nest for every four birds. Most producers prefer individual nests because the closed community nest is hot, eggs get dirty, broken and usually there are more floor eggs.

8. When a nonlayer is noticed, take her out of the flock at once. With the well-bred birds of today, it is not necessary to catch and cull the hens. Sight cull while feeding and watering the hens.

#### CAGE OPERATION

A hen in a cage depends on the producer for food, water and proper living conditions. Small oversights cost many producers their profits.

1. Keep a profitable bird in every cage.

2. Start chicks every 4 months to keep ample replacements. When there is an excess

of pullets, put two in a cage until enough cages are available to place one in a cage.

3. Replacement pullets 14 to 20 weeks old can be purchased. If this method is used, make certain the pullets have been vaccinated for Newcastle, bronchitis and fowl pox.

4. Keep water before the birds at all times. Let the birds clean the feed troughs once a day so old feed will not accumulate. Do not leave the birds without feed for more than 1 hour.

5. Clean the cage house only one time, preferably during the fall or winter. This will allow the manure to cone up again before hot weather, and will decrease the problem of wet droppings.

6. A regular spraying program is necessary to control flies. Spray the droppings once a week and if wet spots occur spray them more often. For flies and other parasites see Extension Service L-256, *Texas Guide for Controlling External Parasites of Livestock Poultry*.

7. Control leaks in the water system. A small amount of water on the manure will encourage flies.

8. The 8-inch cage is the recommended size for one-bird cages. Many producers use the 10-inch cage, but usually they intend to put two birds in this size cage.

9. Diseases and parasites continue to attack caged layers. The producer should be alert to these possibilities so prevention and treatment practices can be applied.

10. The cage house should be well ventilated during the summer. Open the sides of the house as much as possible. Hens in cages suffer more from heat than birds on the floor.

11. Each individual must study his situation and work out a sound culling program that best fits the operation. The price of eggs, cull birds, cost of replacements and rate of lay must be considered before culling a bird. Only sick birds should be taken out until 4 months of production has been reached.