



Efficiency of poultry production - for sustainable commercial operation

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Poultry production, be it for egg or meat has come a long way from a backyard venture to large commercial operation. This transition was made possible by technological innovations and their adoption over a period of time. In the initial stages of development the thrust has been to increase quantitative production by improving the breed and by applying breeding tools. Innovations were also made and applied on aspects relating to feeding, management, disease control etc. Thus, to day we have chicken capable of producing 300 plus eggs per annum and broilers attaining a weight of 1.5 kg in 4 to 5 weeks of age. Further improvement in egg number or body weight through conventional breeding strategies has to inch its way up. Profit margin from poultry production is narrowing day by day. Further, the producer has little control over marketing of his products. Quite often he is at the mercy of market variations. It is in this context that efficiency of production emerges as corner stone for sustaining in the commercial poultry venture.

The production cost can broadly be classified into capital and recurring cost. Attempts to improve the effi-

ciency of utilization of the above will result in efficiency of production. The efficiency of utilization of capital cost, which include buildings, infrastructure and also part of recurring costs like labour, electricity, rentals, depreciation maintenance etc. leaves little room for major maneuvering. But if the size of operation can be increased with same capital, the expenditure will be distributed over more units. Therefore, operating with larger flock is one method of improving efficiency of utilization of capital cost and there by production.

Feed accounts for 75-80 per cent of cost of production of egg or meat. Therefore, feed cost becomes the central point among recurring costs. Intelligent and skillful management of feed can improve efficiency of production.

Feed conversion efficiency (FCR) is widely used as a measure to check the efficiency with which feed is converted into egg/meat. It is defined as the quantity (kg) of feed required to produce one unit (kg/doz.) of egg or meat. The lower the FCR figure the better is the efficiency of feed utilization.

Several factors such as breed, sex etc. are said to influence feed efficiency ratio. But for the producer the most important factor is feed wastage occurring at the site of production. Every step taken by him to eliminate feed wastage will add up to production efficiency.

The factors that influence feed wastage can broadly be classified as physical and biological factors.

A. Physical factors

The following factors play major role in physical wastage and therefore needs closer monitoring.

(a) Structure and method of use of feeders

Feed gets wasted by use of improperly designed and also by use of feeders not specific for the age category. For example the feeders for growers and adults should be shallow and should have lips to avoid loss due to billing and scratching.

Like wise, while positioning feeders it should be so placed that the lip of feeder is on line with the back of the bird. The feeders should never be filled to the brim.

(b) Presence of rodents

One of the major ways through which feed is wasted

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