

Effect of Grower Diets on the Performance of Egg Production Type Pullets¹

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INTRODUCTION

It is generally agreed that replacement pullets grown for production of commercial eggs should be fed a well fortified, low fiber, 21 percent protein starter diet for the first eight weeks of life.

The best method of feeding from eight weeks of age until housing is controversial. Many poultry breeders have developed a system of feeding supposedly styled to fit their particular breed or strain, and in many instances this has been modified by the individual producer to meet the needs of his particular conditions. Although each flock of pullets is raised on a given feeding program it will fit into one of three general programs. These three programs are usually referred to as: (1) full feeding program, (2) limited feeding program, and (3) high fiber feeding program.

The full feeding program entails the feeding of a well fortified low fiber diet, containing 18 percent protein, from 8 to 16 weeks of age, at which time the level of protein is reduced to 16 percent. This diet is given until 21 weeks of age, when the pullets are changed to the layer diet.

The same 18 percent protein grower diet used in the full feeding program is used with the limited feeding program. However, from 8 to 21 weeks of age the amount of feed the birds are allowed to eat each day is limited. Usually they are given approximately 70 percent of the amount of feed they would usually consume. When pullets are grown in winter months, supplementary feeding of 2 to 4 pounds of grain per 100 birds may be given daily, especially on cold days.

The high fiber feeding program consists of "full feeding" from 8 to 21 weeks of age, a diet containing at least 15 percent fiber and 15 percent protein. This high level of fiber results in a feed so bulky that the pullet cannot consume sufficient amounts

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