

Chapter 15 - WATER AND FEED LINE MANAGEMENT

Content

- Feeding lines
- Water lines
- Preventive maintenance

A. Feed lines

To prevent excess spillage, feed lines need to be adjusted as broilers grow. Feed consumption should be monitored to detect any problems with the operation of the feed lines.



B. Water lines

The time and labor involved in cleaning open-type waterers makes them impractical for larger broiler farms. An enclosed watering system that needs little or no cleaning is preferred. Although enclosed waterers minimize labor, they require as much or more management as open waterers. Their height is critical and must be adjusted daily. Pressure regulators also require frequent monitoring and adjustment.

An effective filtering system is essential when using enclosed systems. Inspect filter cartridges weekly and replace as needed. Perform routine flushing and preventive maintenance after every flock.

Water meters are useful and are recommended for large farms. Monitor and compare water consumption between houses and flocks to identify disease and production problems quickly. An alarm system that alerts the grower when water pressure drops in a house is also a worthwhile safety feature.

Research has shown that chicks have a preference for the lines toward the center of the house. Water line usage is symmetrical with greatest use in the center and lower as you move out towards the walls. However, water line usage tends to even out. This may be due to the fact that chickens become less mobile as they get older. Water line preference is largely determined by ease of use since broilers are basically lazy. Water line height and nipple flow rate will also affect water line choice. Nipple flow rate is determined primarily by nipple design and nipple pressure.

C. Preventive maintenance

While automated equipment enables growers to care for more broilers with less labor, serious problems occur when equipment malfunctions. Today's large farms have so much equipment, something always needs repairing. As a result, birds are frequently neglected.

Minimize time spent working on equipment with a preventive maintenance program. Between flocks, inspect and tighten all fan belts, clean dust and debris off fan motors and shutters, flush out the entire watering system and completely clean out the feeding system. Keep an inventory of spare parts (including fan and feeder motors, belts, water nipples, fogger nozzles, pumps for fogging systems, PVC pipe, water filter cartridges and light bulbs) on hand at all times. **Develop a maintenance checklist** based on the recommendations of equipment manufacturers. Include scheduled maintenance dates and check them off as maintenance is performed.