

SESSION III - ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND AGRI-FOOD SECURITY

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PERFORMANCE AND EGG QUALITY OF LAYING HENS FED DIETS CONTAINING FEATHER MEAL

Caisin Larisa, Cara Alla

Technical University of Moldova, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

E-mail: larisa.caisin@mpasa.utm.md

Poultry farming in Moldova is one of the most important sectors of agriculture. Industrial poultry farming allows for the production of high-quality products with high feed efficiency. Modern industrial poultry farming utilizes highly productive hybrid poultry, which places increased demands on proper nutrition.

The present study was conducted at an industrial poultry farm to investigate the impact of feather meal added to the diet on the productivity and quality of eggs in laying hens at 34 weeks of age. In total, 1000 Hy-Line W-36 laying hens were housed in cages across six tiers. According to the research findings on the use of feather meal in the composition of feed for laying hens, it was observed that its utilization contributed to an increase in the productive qualities of the birds.

The results indicated that the productivity indicators in terms of egg production, egg weight, and egg white mass were influenced by the inclusion of feather meal at levels of 2% or 3.5% of the diet. The incorporation of feather meal into the diets of the hens led to an increase in egg weight by 1.29 grams (2.1%; $P \leq 0.05$) in Experimental Group 1, by 0.97 grams (1.6%; $P < 0.05$) in Experimental Group 2, by 0.83 grams (1.4%; $P \leq 0.05$) in Experimental Group 3, and by 0.75 grams (1.3%; $P \leq 0.05$) in Experimental Group 4, compared to the control group, where egg weight was 7.87 grams.

Thus, our study revealed that the addition of feather meal significantly improved egg production and egg quality in the experimental groups compared to the control group.

Keywords: egg, egg production, feather meal, feed, laying hens.