ROSS
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THE INSIDE CHIRP

POULTRY NEWS VOL 37

FEEDING SPACE

AVIAGEN MANAGEMENT ESSENTIALS

Aviagen®

REARING (0 - 105 DAYS)

FEEDING SPACE

Bird uniformity and performance will be affected negatively if there is not enough or too much feeding space for the number of birds in the house. Recommended feeding space for males and females is given in **Table 1.**

Table 1: Recommended Feeding Space

MALES			FEMALES		
Age (days)	Track Feeder (cm)	Pan Feeder (cm)	Age (days)	Track Feeder (cm)	Pan Feeder (cm)
0 - 35	5	5	0 - 35	5	4
36 - 70	10	9	36 - 70	10	8
71 - 105	15	11	71 - 105	15	10

Track and pan feeder lines should be positioned a minimum of 1m apart to allow uniform and unobstructed bird access to the feeder (**Figure 1** and **Figure 2**). The distance between pan feeders within a line (from center to center) should be a minimum of 0.75m.

Figure 1:
Uniform distribution of females around a track feeder when adequate feeder space is given.

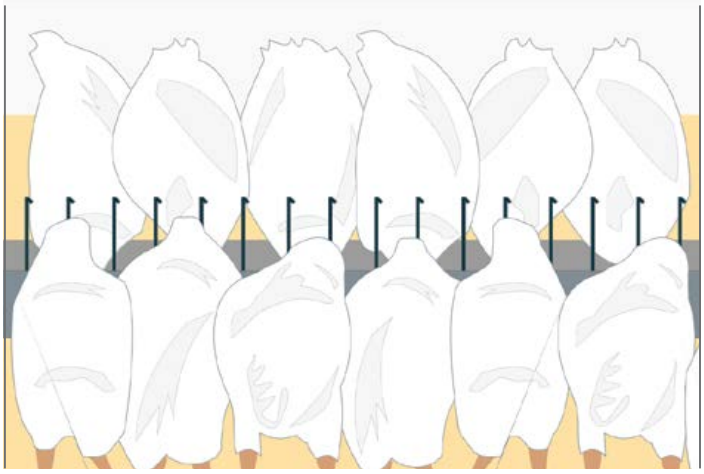
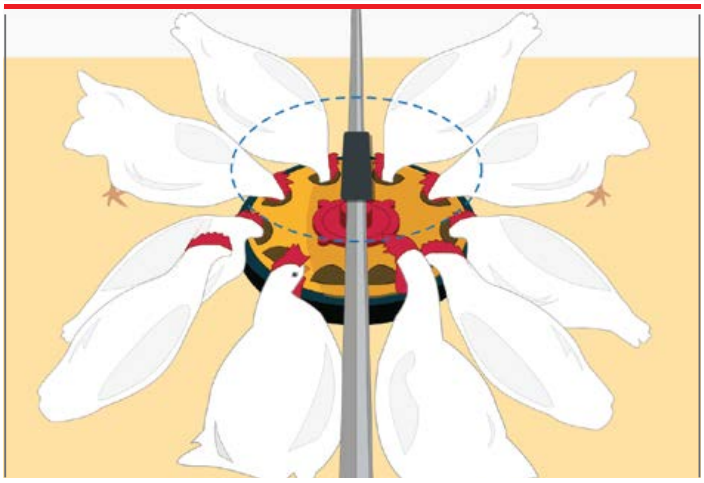


Figure 2:
Uniform distribution of males around a pan feeder when adequate feeding space is given.



KEY POINTS

- Bird uniformity will be negatively affected if feeding space and/or bird distribution are not correct.
- Be present at feeding time to ensure correct feed and bird distribution within the house.
- Spacing between feeders should allow the birds easy access.

FEEDING MANAGEMENT

The first step in feeding management is to install the correct number of feeders, providing adequate feeding space so all birds can eat simultaneously (**Table 1**). This step provides uniform feed distribution and prevents overcrowding at feeders. Feed distribution and feeding behavior must be observed every day by experienced personnel at feeding time**.**

Where track feeding or pans are used, birds should be gradually introduced to the automated system from 8 days of age onwards. This process should be completed over a 2-3 day period, during which time the volume of feed in the automated feeding system should be increased gradually so that birds become accustomed to the noise of the feeders and associate this with feeding. During this transitional period, manual feeding by hand should continue.

If more than one feeder track is used, then tracks should run in opposite directions. All feed should be distributed to each population within 3 minutes. Make use of a variable speed motor to reduce the speed of the chain when chicks are being trained onto the

feeding system. If feed distribution is a problem, distribution time can be reduced by placing a supplementary bin, with sufficient feed to fill half of the track, halfway around the feeder loop. Ensure feed levels in track feeders are monitored and adjusted relative to age and volume by adjusting feeder slides regularly. On all track feeder corners and bins, ensure the openings are well covered.

Pan feeders provide good feed distribution if managed properly. Pan feeding systems remain charged (full of feed) at all times to allow the system to work correctly and pan feeders must be checked regularly to make sure that all pans are receiving feed and that lines remain charged. When birds are young, ensure the pan openings are adjusted to prevent multiple birds from entering the same opening.

Feed depth, distribution time and clean-up time should be monitored routinely at several points around the house. This is to ensure that feed distribution is correct, that all birds have access to the feeders at the same time and that the whole feeding system is being filled correctly. **It is best practice to distribute feed in the dark.**

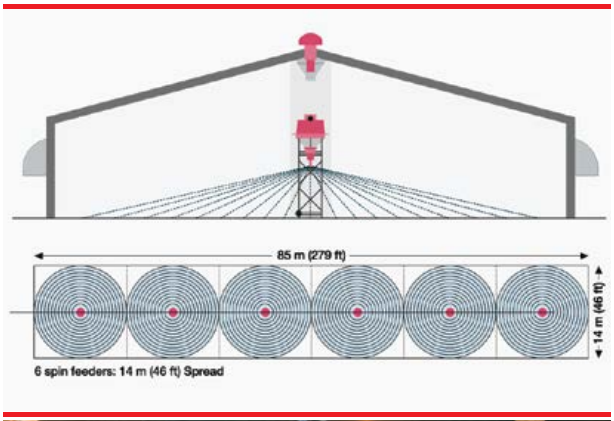
Feeder height should be adjusted regularly with bird age and growth. Correct feeder height at a given age should minimize feed spillage, optimize bird access and prevent the feeders from becoming contaminated with litter.

Floor feeding (**Figure 3**) is an alternative to tracks and pans. This method offers rapid and even distribution of feed over a wide area and can improve flock uniformity, litter condition and leg health. For correct feed distribution, spin feeders should be set-up to prevent overlap of feed at walls and pen partitions.

For floor feeding, pen population size should be no more than 1,000-1,500 birds (depending on the pen shape and spinner type). Having feed of good physical quality is particularly important with floor feeding, and a pellet with 2.5mm diameter and 3-4mm in length should be used.

For floor feeding, the transition to pellet feeding must be well managed. Crumb should be fed on feeder trays on the floor until approximately 14 days of age. Crumb and pellet should be mixed and fed on the floor/ feeder trays for at least 2 days before birds are given 100% pellets at around 16 days of age, when mechanical spin feeding begins.

Figure 3:
Floor feeding using either spin feeders or hand broadcasting.



No matter which feeding system is used, adjustments to feed provision must be made when problems (such as birds becoming overweight, underweight or worsening flock CV%/uniformity) are detected. As the flock increases in age and body weight, feed increases must support the greater nutrient requirements of the heavier birds.

Ideally, feed should not remain stored on the farm for more than a week. Feed bins should always remain covered and be in good condition to prevent water ingress. Any feed spills should be cleaned up promptly.

Use a standard weight to check the accuracy of the feed scales daily before use. Save a sample of feed from each delivery and store it in a cool, dry place. If a problem develops, the feed can then be analyzed.

A visual assessment of every feed delivery should be made. The feed should be assessed on its physical quality, colour, appearance and smell. For mash, check that there is good distribution of raw materials throughout the feed.

Physical quality of the feed is important and levels of fines should not exceed 10% for pellets/crumbs or 25% for mash. Increased levels of fines will have a negative impact on uniformity in early rear. The level of fines within a feed can be measured using a feed shaker sieve.

MANAGEMENT INTO LAY (15 WEEKS TO PEAK PRODUCTION)

FEEDER SPACE

Recommended feeder and drinker spaces for both males and females are given in **Table 2.**

Table 2: Recommended feeder space from 15 weeks of age to depletion

	FEEDER		
	Age (weeks)	Track (cm)	Pan (cm)
MALE	15 - 20	15	11
	20 weeks to depletion	20	13
FEMALE	15 - 20	15	10
	20 weeks to depletion	15	10

KEY POINTS

- Follow recommended allowances for stocking density and for feeding and drinker spaces, and adapt ventilation accordingly.
- Ensure increases in available floor space and feeding and drinking spaces are given at the recommended ages.

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