

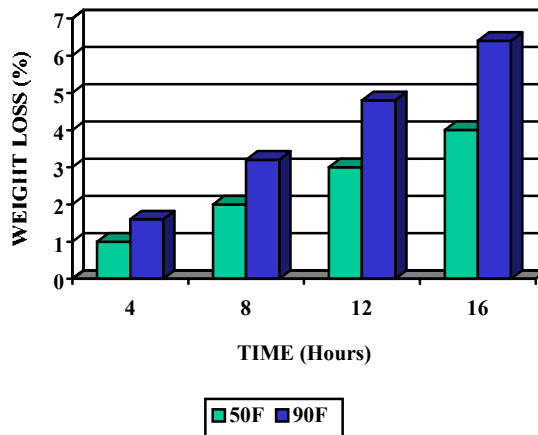


Worthwhile Operational Guidelines & Suggestions

BROILER PROCESSING TIMELY INFORMATION - APRIL 2003

HOW MUCH IS YOUR SHRINK?

Live weight shrinkage is a common term used to describe the weight loss that occurs in broilers from catch to processing. During this critical period, birds are fasted, caught, confined, transported, and held at the plant prior to slaughter. Although shrinkage can be influenced by many factors (i.e., strain cross, diet density, transportation density and duration, plant holding time and conditions), the most critical are the total time off-feed and environmental conditions (temperature and humidity):



Weight loss during the first 4-6 h of feed withdrawal is due to emptying of the digestive tract. Since chickens have limited glycogen storage, maintenance energy needs are drawn from tissue (fat and protein) breakdown. Heat stress causes additional weight loss from dehydration, as, in the absence of sweat glands, birds primarily rely on evaporation of water from the lungs to dissipate heat (panting). Minimizing live weight shrinkage has a tremendous economic value to a processor through increased saleable product yield.

Contact: S. F. Bilgili, Ph.D.

Phone: (334) 844-2612

E-mail: sbilgili@acesag.auburn.edu



Poultry Science Department, Auburn University, Auburn, AL 36849-5416

www.ag.auburn.edu/dept/ph/