



Worthwhile Operational Guidelines & Suggestions

BROILER PROCESSING TIMELY INFORMATION - JULY 2003

VERIFICATION OF FEED WITHDRAWAL PROGRAM

Feed must be withdrawn from poultry prior to slaughter in order to reduce the potential for carcass contamination during processing. Ideal feed withdrawal program should reduce visible and microbiological contamination, without affecting the quality and yield of products. In most operations, feed withdrawal programs are typically designed, implemented, and, when necessary, modified by the live production departments, with some input from the plant. Successful feed withdrawal programs are not only based on good training (what, why and how) and effective verification (when and by who), but also on strong lines of communication (feedback) between the production and processing departments. Plant observations on “flock condition” should be timely and objective, as they serve as a “gauge” to fine-tune the feed withdrawal program. Following assessments, based on a flock basis, can be invaluable information in this respect:

- Observe the appearance of carcasses after picking and prior to evisceration. A sunken-in abdomen indicates that the digestive tract is empty of its contents with little or no gas.
- Check viscera packs from 20-30 birds per flock (or lot):
 - * Crop and stomach should be empty.
 - * Gizzard should contain some feed. Gizzards that are empty, bile-stained (green), or full of feathers and/or litter material, are indicative of excessively long fasting.
 - * Intestinal tract should be empty, flat (like a ribbon), with very little contents and gas formation.
 - * Test the integrity of the intestinal tract. When cut open length-wise, if the mucosa appears sloughing and the intestine remains flat, then the integrity of the gut is compromised. Such a weak tissue will not handle the various pressures applied during automated evisceration and likely to break easily.
- Check the rate of bile contamination. High rate of bile contamination is common on flocks fasted for 12+ hours, as gall bladder expands and ruptures easily.

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