

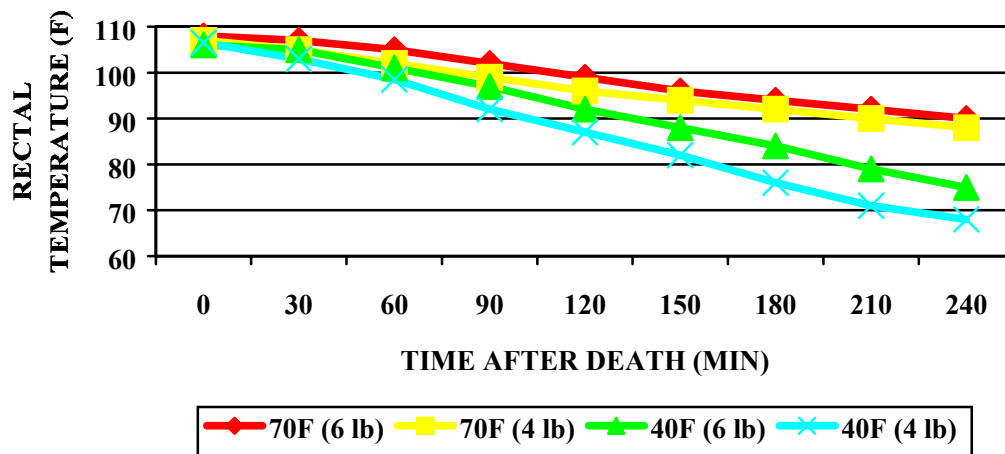


Worthwhile Operational Guidelines & Suggestions

BROILER PROCESSING TIMELY INFORMATION - JUNE 2003

DOA RECTAL TEMPERATURES TO ASSESS THE TIME OF DEATH

The dead-on-arrivals (DOA's) can be a significant economical and welfare issue for a broiler complex. Causes of pre-slaughter mortality are not well understood, but, through necropsy, can be classified into three broad categories: 1. Farm-related causes (flock health, acute heart attacks), 2. Catching and live-haul related trauma (catching method, crew, and cage density), and 3. Plant causes (long yard time and poor holding conditions). High market weights, high environmental temperatures and humidity, and time of day (peak temperatures vs. night time) will certainly exacerbate the DOA problem. Assessment of time of death can be an important tool to reduce DOA's. Dr. Scott Gustin from the University of Georgia recently utilized the rectal temperatures of DOA's to estimate death time in broilers. As shown below, cooling curves can be established for target weight broilers at different environmental temperatures:



*Gustin, S., 2003. When did the broilers dead on arrival at the plant? The Poultry Informed Professional, 73: 4-5.



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