Worthwhile Operational Guidelines & Suggestions

Avoiding Heat Stress from Catching through Lairage

Acute heat stress can occur during loading, transport, and holding of broilers at the processing plant, particularly in geographical regions with high summer temperatures. This heat stress can lead to DOAs as well as pale meat with lower water-holding capacity and greater cook loss. In order to improve bird welfare and product quality, multiple approaches can be used to keep the birds cool during this time.

1. Appropriate feed withdrawal to minimize heat production
2. Avoid unnecessary bird movement during catching
3. Avoid crowding of birds in the house during catching
4. Decrease the number of birds per coop
5. Park transport trailer in the shade during loading at the farm
6. Utilize fine misters and fan systems
7. Choose a route to the processing plant to minimize potential stops (e.g. traffic lights)
8. Hold birds at the plant in a shaded area with adequate ventilation, misters, and fans