Layer Chicken

Production Management

Birds managed in a suitable environment will grow and produce good quality product leading to a maximum farm output. Maximum output requires integration of quality chicks and management of feed, water, health and environment. Stress should be avoided. Quality chick will have good growth rate and high egg production with good quality eggs. Good and enough feed and water should be given. Feed should be stored at a suitable temperature to maintain its quality. At every growing stage each bird should be given enough floor space, feed and watering space. The height of the feeder and drinker should vary with the growing stage. These factors will not only prevent stress and wastage but also ensure growth uniformity

Farm Waste Management

Farm waste includes rubbish, floor litter, dead birds, birds waste and broken eggs. These farm waste will be a good breeding site for flies, attract predators bringing along diseases and cause unpleasant smell. If it is not manage systematically it will affect the environment and leads to diseases in birds.

Location and Housing

For effective, productive, maximum output and continuity, choosing suitable farm location and building of sheds as well as good management are important. Society sensitivity to environment and quality product for health and life has resulted in regu;lations that should be obeyed by the industry.

Farm Location

Choosing a suitable farm location is important. The important factors in choosing the farm location are:

i. The area should be far from the town and housing areas.
ii. Good communication facilities.
iii. Far from other farms
iv. Flat area with good irrigation system
v. Good ventilation

Poultry Shed

The shed built should provide a pleasant environment to the birds and workers as well as economical cost.

i. The materials used should be of good quality to reduce maintenance cost, durable, easy to clean and do not absorb heat.
ii. Trees and other infrastructures around the shed should not obstruct air ventilation.
iii. The shed design should facilitate clean air ventilation.
iv. The shed design should enable workers to work efficiently in the shed, collecting eggs and removing the farm wastes.

Disease Management

Disease will reduce productivity from the increase in cost of operation from drug usage, mortality, effects on growth, production as well as the quality of eggs produced. Disease control such as biosecurity and vaccination should be done as scheduled. Regulations must be followed in the use of drugs for treatments to ensure that drug residues do not occur in the eggs. Do not use illegal drugs. The right usage of drugs will prevent the development of drug resistance.

Good Animal Husbandry Practices

Enforcing good farming practice in farm planning, disease control and daily management will improve farm productivity, minimise cost, maximise output, environment and good product quality. This will increase customers' confidence, increase marketing opportunity and ensure farm stability.

Technology

Some new technologies have been introduced in poultry egg production. The use of these tecnologies reduce manpower requirements and increase farm output.

- Closed housing with controlled ventilation will provide cool and pleasant environment to the birds. Cost of investment is higher due to facilities for cooling, environmental controlas well as electricity cost. As chickens require only a small floor space, more birds can be housed. A close house system will aid in effective controlling of diseases especially those brought by wild birds and animals. Among the methods used are evaporative cooling system and tunnel ventilation. This type of housing system requires expertise in management and maintainence.

- Automation used include dispensing of feed and drink, debeaking, collection, packing and grading of eggs and waste disposal.

MARKETING

Local Market

About 90 per cent of production is for the local market. All eggs are marketed in the form of shell-egg. Eggs are mainly marketted through wholesalers and a small part to retailers who come to the farm. Besides that, eggs are used by food processing plants such as bakeries and coconut jam producers.

Poultry Egg Prices

In Malaysia, eggs are marketed based on grades. Eggs are graded based on weight. The grades are AA, A,B,C,D,E and F :

AA	more than 70 gram
A	65-70 gram
B	60-65 gram
C	55-60 gram
D	50-55 gram
E	45-50 gram
F	less than 45 gram

Percentage of each grade produced depends on breed and management. The average percentage of grade is as below:

AA	4
A	12
B	28
C	31
D	18
E	5
F	2

Average Chicken Egg Prices (sen / egg)

	AA	A	B	C	D	E	F
1996	18.02	17.52	16.98	16.33	15.33	14.33	
1997	17.65	17.16	16.55	15.78	14.78	13.78	11.10
1998	18.52	17.83	16.94	16.16	15.21	14.21	13.21
1999	19.59	19.09	18.55	18.03	17.53	16.53	15.53

Transportation

It is important to reduce heat and stress during transportation of chicks. Chicks exposed to stress may experience high mortality, stunted growth, affect body resistant and easily infected by diseases. Delivery of chicks to buyers should use well ventilated vehicles. Eggs shold be handled with care to prevent breakage. The use of good transportation system and good egg trays will reduce this problem. To maintain good quality eggs, transportation should have good ventilation systems especially with refrigeration.

Export Market

About 8 – 11 percent of eggs produced are exported. All eggs are exported in the form of shell-egg. The main market is Singapore. To penetrate the export market, a farm should satisfy the stated requirements of the importing countries such as veterinary sanitation, quality assurance and disease status as well as price and product competitiveness.

Chicken Egg Exports ('000 metric tonne)

1996	1997	1998	1999
33,403	40,244	27,494	34,800