Scottish Egg Producer Retailers Association

MARKET REPORT

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Date: 30th October 2015

	Size	V. Large	Large	Medium	Small
Farm to Shop Prices	Colony	£1.49	£1.25	£1.15	80p
Scottish Wholesaler	Colony F/R	£1.20 £1.50	90p £1.40	80p £1.30	
English Wholesaler	Colony F/R Colony F/R	£1.40 £1.70 £1.30 £1.60	£1.20 £1.45 £1.10 £1.55	£1.00 £1.20 £1.00 £1.40	75p 85p 70p 85p
Packer / Producer Contracted average Price					
		Organic	**FreeRange**	**Barn**	**Colony**
		£1.20/£1.45	90p/£1.15	75p/95p	65p/85p
Producer / Consumer		V. Large	Large	Medium	Small
- Colony	Prices	£2.00	£1.85	£1.40	90p
- Free Range	Prices	£3.00	£2.35	£1.93	£1.05
Free-Range to Farm Shop	Prices	£1.75/£2.25	£1.31/£1.91	£1.15/£1.45	95p
Central Egg Agency	Colony F/R	£1.03(-2p) £1.55(+7p)	84p(-3p) £1.45(+7p)	77p £1.35(+7p)	60p £1.05(+7p)
Imported Continental Prices in Bulk					
Dutch Eggs **Germany**	Colony Barn	90p(+1p)	70p 75p(+1p)	65p 69p(+1p)	59p

The market is on the move with it looks like a lot more to come especially in Free Range which are very scarce and in particular Small which are just not there and non -existent Small can't move up to Medium.

Continental prices are also moving up especially with alternative system eggs, with increased demand and many enquiries from the UK for the same.

The French want an increase in price and a better deal from their supermarkets (don't we all) we will certainly be most interested and how they get on, especially the tactics, will there be trailer loads of muck, or hens running up and down supermarket floors, these tactics seem to help our milk producers a bit.

Egg quality after Barry Thorp's comments on the problems in the North of Scotland (last week) we thought it might shorten the winter slightly with the article on how to cope with the heat problems just in

case we get a long hot summer next year, as the North of Scotland has the thinnest ozone layer as protection against UV's which are not too good for our Free Range/Organic hens either.

Poultry Club of Scotland Dinner 20th, missed it this year for the first time, prior appointment with the NHS, Steve Mitchell tells us that the 335 dinners this year had an excellent dinner again with many people making a weekend of it with over 180 room bookings.

David Scott of Lowman GB was presented with the Howie/Surgenor cup for his contributions to the poultry industry. (Pictures to follow next week)

French egg-producers want higher prices

Three regional unions of egg producers in France are demanding higher prices for their products. They accuse the big supermarkets in the country of "ignoring the revaluation that is necessary to save the production of eggs in France, which is unacceptable."

The call from the regional association of egg producers in the South-East of the country Apose and the farmers unions of Bretagne and of Rhône-Alpes coincides with the price negotiations between the large supermarkets and their suppliers, an annual ritual in France. "The supermarket companies have to adjust their pricing policy in order to keep the sector and the jobs," Apose says. The 2 other unions already warn for actions "if we don't get an answer soon to our legitimite demands."

If there is any industry in the world that knows how to efficiently produce animal protein it is the poultry and egg sector. Eggs in particular are not only nutritious, they are produced using the fewest of resources. Yet there are two reasons to increase our focus on sustainable egg production.

According to the France egg producers, the market has found a balance thanks to their efforts to manage the production better. That has led to a price rise which is jeopardised now because of pressure from the big buyers. "Because production costs have been rising, an increasing number of producers is making a loss." The problems hit producers of alternative eggs harder because their production costs are even higher, the unions say.

Ruud Peys

Improve eggshell quality during heat stress

Heat stress in layers has a severe negative impact on eggshell quality. The addition of certain supplements

to the bird's diet could alleviate the effect of heat stress on acid-base imbalance, plasma Ca concentration, egg production and egg quality in commercial layers.

Maintaining the highest percentage of first grade eggs, even during heat stress, is essential for commercially viable egg production.

Eggshell quality is of major importance to the egg industry and also has a major economic impact on commercial egg production. Broken and cracked eggs represent an economic loss to egg producers. Some 6-8% of all eggs produced commercially are unusable because of poor shell quality. Numerous factors involved in eggshell quality include nutrition, age, stress and disease. But the most important factor which should be managed for the bird's health and to maintain good eggshell quality is heat stress.

Effect of heat stress

The extent of heat stress will be influenced by factors such as humidity and the extent to which the birds have become acclimatised. The deleterious effects of heat stress on eggshell quality appear to be due to several reasons. Both heat exposure and reduced appetite affect the laying performance and eggshell quality of birds exposed to high ambient temperatures. Whereas egg production and egg weight are influenced to a major extent by the reduction in feed consumption, eggshell quality is influenced primarily by high temperature.

- Heat stress in birds causes many biochemical and physiological changes, such as shifts in acid-base balance, hyperthermia, increased oxygen consumption and the release of carbon di-oxide, increased production of free radicals and corticosterone.
- Depressed feed intake results in decreased calcium consumption.
- At high temperatures, birds pant to enhance evaporative cooling. Panting results in respiratory alkalosis, which is caused by loss of carbon dioxide from the blood and involves an increase in blood pH. This, in turn, decreases the proportion of the blood calcium that is in the ionised form and reduces the amount of calcium available for eggshell formation.
- The activity of carbonic anhydrase (the enzyme which produces bicarbonate for shell formation) is also reduced during heat stress and blood flow to the uterus is also decreased.
- Under high temperature, blood flow within the body is changed and more blood flows to peripheral tissues to transfer more heat from the body core to the surface. The decreased concentration of plasma calcium and the partial pressure of carbon dioxide is attributable to respiratory alkalosis.
- Reduction in shell weight.
- Low shell thickness.
- High eggshell reflectivity. The light coloured shell of the eggs laid during heat stress is due to the reduction in pigment deposited in the cuticle.

Bicarbonate supplementation

Loss of carbon dioxide is accentuated by the need for blood bicarbonate to buffer the hydrogen ions produced during eggshell formation. A reduced bicarbonate concentration in the lumen of the shell gland adversely affects eggshell quality, leading to the laying of rough-shelled eggs. It is therefore possible that, at high temperatures, hens have a nutritional requirement for bicarbonate in order to improve eggshell quality by supplementing the diet with sodium bicarbonate at the rate of 2-2.5 kilogram (kg) per tonne of feed.

The eggshell formation occurs normally during dark periods, but sodium bicarbonate intake by birds does not happen during dark periods. In order to improve sodium bicarbonate intake, the birds are provided with an extended photo period of 18 to 20 hours. An extended photo period does not affect egg production during heat-stressed conditions. Continuous lighting allows hens to consume the dietary supplements during the period of active eggshell formation. If sodium is increased by supplementation with sodium

bicarbonate, then, to balance the higher level of sodium, ammonium chloride is supplemented along with the sodium bicarbonate at the ratio of (40:60).

Zinc supplementation

Carbonic anhydrase is reduced during high temperatures. Carbonic anhydrase is required to form bicarbonate that passes through the shell gland to form calcium carbonate. So zinc supplementation in the form of zinc methionine or zinc propionate increases the carbonic anhydrase activity that alleviates the effect of heat stress and maintains better eggshell quality.

Potassium Chloride supplementation

Water is an essential nutrient which facilitates the transfer of the minerals (Na^+, K^+, Cl^-). The water intake during summer increases to three times the feed intake. The water circulation in the body system reduces body heat. In cases of heat stressed birds, the water intake becomes suppressed. So, along with the water, potassium chloride mixes at the rate of 0.5-0.6%, improves the water intake by 90%, increases evaporative heat loss by 80% and increases apparent respiratory efficiency by 25%.

Chromium and Manganese supplementation

Heat stress effects are counteracted by chromium (Cr) and manganese (Mn) supplementation in feed. The addition of 20 milligrams (mg) of Cr/kg and 120 mg of Mn/kg of diet alters eggshell thickness.

Ascorbic acid supplementation

Ascorbic acid is a natural supplement available to alleviate heat stress in layers during hot weather. Adding 5 millilitres of lemon juice per litre of drinking water will reduce eggs with broken and fragile shells. The useful effect of lemon juice on the eggshell quality of heat-stressed birds could be due to ingredients such as the ascorbic acid in lemon juice.

Although poultry can synthesise vitamin-C, its quantity becomes insufficient during heat stress as a result of its increased rate of usage to combat the free radicals generated. Vitamin C supplementation at 500 parts per million (ppm) is beneficial to maintaining bird performance, including interior and exterior egg quality under severe environmental stresses. The decline in eggshell quality is affected not only by the decreased intake of calcium and phosphorus, but also by the depletion of the ascorbic acid required for the conversion of 25-hydroxycholecalciferol-r into the one 25-dihydroxycholecalciferol produced in the kidneys, which is essential for regulating calcium metabolism and eggshell calcification.

Vitamin-E supplementation

In a normal bird, there is sufficient antioxidant capacity to remove active oxygen; but when exposed to environmental stress, this may be depressed. Through its intra-membrane antioxidant properties, vitamin E may protect tissue membranes from the lipid peroxidation caused by free radical attacks and it alleviates the effects of environmental stress in laying hens. Supplementation of vitamin C at 200 mg/kg and vitamin E at 250 mg/kg in the diet can ameliorate the detrimental effects of heat stress and improve the egg quality parameters of egg weight, eggshell weight, albumen and yolk weight.

Cost-effective measures

Measures to alleviate the effects of heat stress by adding supplements to the bird's diet could alleviate the effect of heat stress on acid-base imbalance, plasma Ca concentration, egg production and egg quality in commercial layers. These are the cost-effective ways of combating heat stress without creating additional

stress in birds. Egg breakage will be reduced and fertility and hatchability will be improved in parent flock.

References available upon request

T. Sasidhar, K. Rajendran, K. Mani, T. Vasanthakumar, U. Prabhakaran, S. Ramya, S. Durga, Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, Namakkal, Tamilnadu, India

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Farm workers' sick days revealed and it's a dangerous game

Published 21 October 2015

Farm workers suffer from more serious injuries, that keep them off work for over one month, than any other industry, a new study reveals.

More than 45 per cent of agricultural workers recently surveyed had taken time off work for over one month; of these the average worker in the industry needed to take a huge three months off work to recover from illness or injury.

The study, commissioned by family focussed insurance company There found that out of the 25 industries researched farm workers take a higher than average number of days off work per year (3.7) compared to the UK average number of 2.8 days.

In fact, almost a third admitted they would be unable to pay bills after just one month if they couldn't work due to illness or injury. A quarter would need to find ways of radically cutting the family outgoings – a frightening prospect.

Despite this, over 60 per cent of agricultural workers surveyed don't have any personal financial protection insurance and the majority wouldn't receive full pay if they had to take time off work for sickness or injury. Over 40 per cent would receive no income at all.

Philippa McLaglen, Marketing Manager from There explains: "Our research shows that farmers are more exposed to the risk of accidents, with the average farmer experiencing 16 accidents a year and 14 per cent having between 2 and 4 accidents every month. It's clearly a risky business to be in."

A quarter of agricultural workers surveyed would be concerned about competitors taking advantage if they were unable to work. Shockingly 21 per cent of farm workers, compared to an average 8 percent across the other industries surveyed, fear being dismissed when off work for sickness or injury.

And 17 per cent worry that they would appear to be not serious about their career if they take time off sick, compared to the average of 8 per cent for the other industries surveyed. With 21 per cent, compared to the average 10 per cent from other industries, believing the business would stall because decisions couldn't be made without them.

Work piling up (57 per cent), their business reputation suffering (39 per cent) and loss of income (35 per cent) are the biggest impacts of taking time off work for farm workers.

Such is the physical nature of the industry that farmers ranked the 3rd highest for taking time off sick with back pain. Only construction workers and engineers out ranked them.

More than a third (35 per cent) of agricultural workers have become sick or injured from doing their job, which then resulted in them taking time off work. Taking time off sick is not easy. Of the 25 industries surveyed, agricultural workers came top for how strict their current boss is when it comes to the thought of taking a sick day, and over half feel guilty when they do so.

No surprise therefore that 75 per cent had either put on a different voice while on the phone to sound more convincing when calling in sick, asked someone else to call work for them or decided to text or email as opposed to calling.

Philippa McLaglen from There added: "It's ironic that farm workers worry about taking even one day off sick when so many have experienced what it's like to be laid up and not able to work for a month or more. That situation can have a very real financial impact if earnings aren't coming in. Especially for people who are self employed and don't have a financial safety net.

With financial protection, anything is better than nothing to pay the bills if you get injured and can't do your job. Our Too ill to work insurance is designed to pay out if someone does injure themselves, like breaking an arm or leg, and can't do their job for a while."
From Farm Business

We include this email as a lot of it is linked to the GM question in Scotland.

Dear Stakeholder

This email is to update you on progress with negotiations to revise European official food and feed controls legislation.

The Council of the European Union has now agreed to its first reading position on the official controls proposal. This means that Member States have reached compromises on the key issues of charging and competency of controls staff. This position was adopted by Ministers at the Environment Council on Monday.

Trilogues will now begin between the Council, European Commission and European Parliament where the 3 positions will be put alongside each other to come up with a final text.

It has taken our UK colleagues two solid months of hard negotiating to finally reach a deal. Two key points from the agreed text are:

- Maintenance of the status quo on charging
- Increased flexibility in the deployment of staff at slaughterhouses and cutting plants

The charging section, therefore, shows no changes from the current Regulation with mandatory minimum charges at ports, slaughterhouses, cutting plants, fish and dairy processing plants. On the deployment of staff, the Council has agreed flexible principles which will be implemented when the current rules in Regulation 854/2004 are renegotiated in the next three years.

Whilst the compromise reached on charging is disappointing, the UK has successfully

prevented any increase in the scope of mandatory charging and maintained vital flexibility to reduce the burden on smaller businesses. We have also delivered greater flexibility in key areas and fought off increasing prescription, which will support the UK and Scottish approaches to smarter, more efficient controls.

This is not, however, the final agreed text and positions will come under pressure from the European Commission and the European Parliament. With trilogues due to start, now is the time for Scottish stakeholders to contact MEPs in order to influence trilogues. We still expect an agreed text towards the summer of 2016 and transition periods will be 3 years so we will not see changes on the ground until autumn 2019.

I have attached a copy of the Council position for information. For ease of reference, the charging section starts at Article 76 with the minimum rates in an annex. If you have any questions on the text or what the next steps are, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Regards

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