Pollorum tested poultry flocks, 1966-67

Department of Agriculture, Western Australia
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PULLORUM TESTED POULTRY FLOCKS, 1966-67

PULLORUM disease has been virtually eliminated from breeding and hatchery poultry flocks in Western Australia by the annual blood-testing of all birds and the destruction of reactors.

Only 1,642 reactors were found in a total of 278,283 birds tested during the year (ended June 30, 1967)—an incidence of infection of 0.53 per cent.

Adult hens which seem to be perfectly healthy may be carriers of the pullorum germ and may lay a proportion of infected eggs. Chicks hatched from such eggs can spread the infection throughout the incubator and cause deaths among young chicks during the first few days after hatching.

A rapid and simple method of blood-testing has been evolved to aid in the detection of carriers. Until 1954 most leading hatcherymen voluntarily submitted their flocks to the test; this led to a marked reduction in the incidence of the disease.

Early in 1955, an amendment to the Stock Diseases Act made blood-testing compulsory for all commercial breeding and hatchery flocks. It is now required that the incidence of infection as determined by the last test before the start of hatching must be less than 0.5 per cent.

Details of the tests from 1948 to 1967 are given in Table 1.

**Tested flocks**

This year's test showed an average reaction of only 0.53 per cent.; 1,642 reactors were found in 278,283 birds tested.
and 8 of the 25 flocks tested were free of reactors at the first test.

It is interesting to note that there were substantially more birds tested in 1967 than in 1966.

It is estimated that about 170,000 birds tested were raised solely for the production of poultry meat. The estimated corresponding figure for last year was 97,000 birds.

The type of stock tested and subsequently mated to produce either egg-type or meat-type chickens is shown in Table 2, with corresponding figures for last year shown in brackets.

Until June, 1962 all breeding stock was tested between January and June, each year. Since then, with the introduction of special meat-type chickens and all year round hatching, blood testing is now done throughout the year.

All chicks sold in Western Australia must be hatched from eggs derived from pullorum tested stock.