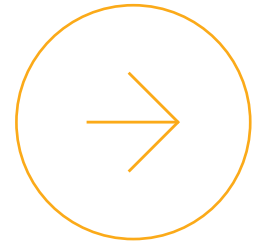


Reducing litter moisture under drinkers



Procedure for adjusting drinker line pressure based on litter conditions

This procedure may be useful if incorrect drinker line pressure is the cause of wet litter under the drinkers (too much water) or reduced bird growth (not enough water).

If focussing on litter conditions, apply this on one drinker line in a shed first. If it works, scale it up to one shed before applying it to the whole farm.

Each brand and type of drinker nipple will respond differently to pressure changes, so use this procedure on each drinker type.

Equipment needed

- Recording sheet and pen to record water pressure height and litter conditions each day of the grow-out.

Step 1

Choose a drinker line

- With different litter conditions underneath it, indicating the drinkers are the cause.
- That is maintained and not likely to be affected by other things that affect litter moisture (e.g. localised high bird density, cool pads, drafts or shed leaks).

Step 2

Inspect the litter conditions

- Assess the litter directly underneath the drinkers (Refer to fact sheet *Assessing litter conditions*).
- Assess the litter away from the drinker line as an indication of other factors affecting litter moisture.
- Record the litter conditions.

Step 3

Adjusting the pressure

- Record the batch day and pressure before making changes.
- If the litter is too wet, reduce the pressure. Make a substantial change. For example, reduce the pressure to half or three quarters of the previous pressure.
- If the litter is dry, increase the pressure.
- Record the new pressure setting.

Step 4

Wait 24 hours and inspect the litter surface

- If the litter surface is still just as wet, consider reducing the pressure further.
- If the litter surface is drying, consider leaving it for another 24 hours.
- If the litter is surface dry, increase the water pressure.
- Record the pressure setting and litter conditions.

Step 5

- Repeat Steps 2 to 4 daily until the end of the grow-out.

Step 6

Review the pressure settings you recorded.

- Smooth out any high or low values you suspect contributed to the litter getting too wet or dry.
- Record the values on a new sheet and use them as starting values in the next grow-out.



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Step 7

Apply the new pressure values to a whole shed (the 'test shed')

- Repeat the daily process of inspecting, changing and recording the drinker line pressure and litter conditions.
- At the end of the grow-out, compare growth rates in the 'test shed' to other sheds on the farm. If growth rate or other performance parameters were reduced, increase the pressure values.

At this point, you may want to compare the values to several 'test sheds' to compare bird performance with the new drinker settings. Once you are satisfied with litter conditions and that bird performance is not affected, the new pressure settings can be applied to the whole farm.

Contact

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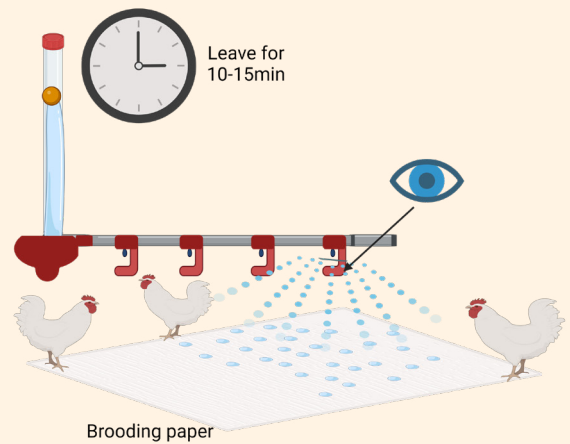
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AgriFutures Australia Project No. PRJ-011502
AgriFutures Australia Publication No. 23-067

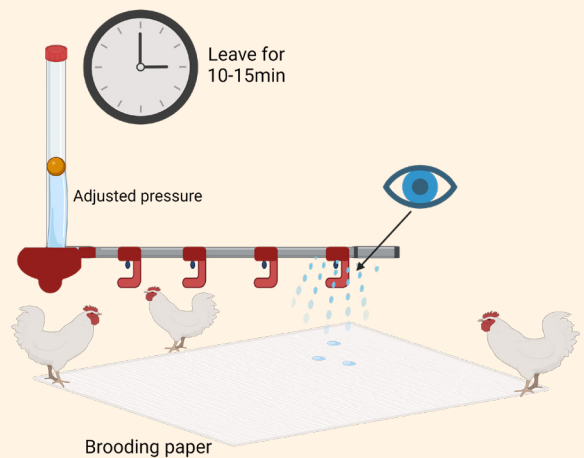
A grower's quick and easy technique to identify water oversupply from drinkers

This easy and quick observation technique helps identify how much water the drinkers are spilling and splashing onto the litter every time the chickens take a drink.

1. Place sheets of paper (used for brooding) under the drinkers.
2. Leave for 10 to 15 minutes.
3. Observe any splashing from water on the paper.
4. Check and modify the drinker system, replacing drinker nipples to a lower flow, or adjust the pressure.



Adjust pressure and Repeat



Contributed by Michael, South Australian grower

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