



Management practices to **Mitigate Floor Eggs**



Floor eggs result from multiple factors, including genetics, nest box design, rearing conditions, early training, production cycle influences, and even individual hen preferences. They pose financial losses, food safety risks, and increased labour demands. However, with proactive management, tailored strategies suited to the flock, and continuous adjustments based on bird behaviour, floor eggs can be effectively minimised.

Here are key management practices to mitigate floor eggs:

REARING PERIOD

- ▶ Train pullets to move upwards using perches, elevated tiers, or like-for-like rearing systems.

PULLETS TRANSFER & TRAINING

- ▶ Transfer pullets at 14–15 weeks to help them acclimatise before laying starts.
- ▶ Conduct regular shed walks for the first six weeks.
- ▶ Immediately remove floor eggs to avoid reinforcing undesired laying spots.
- ▶ Ensure birds learn to move up off the floor and access nest boxes.
- ▶ Restrict litter access during the first few weeks to encourage nest box use.
- ▶ Train birds to roost in designated areas to prevent floor nesting.
- ▶ Discourage feather pecking behaviours.

LABOUR AND TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENT

- ▶ Prioritise keeping birds off the floor at the start of lay to prevent floor laying from becoming a habit.
- ▶ Educate staff on best practices for egg-laying management, especially during the first six weeks of lay.
- ▶ Implementing technologies like automated detection systems can assist staff in identifying floor eggs and flock behaviour.

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NEST BOX MANAGEMENT

- ▶ Keep some nest boxes open and others curtained to allow exploration and familiarity.
- ▶ Ensure nest boxes are visible, familiar, and accessible to hens.
- ▶ Make nests the most comfortable, quiet, enclosed laying option.
- ▶ Schedule feeding outside peak laying hours to prevent distractions.

LITTER AREA

- ▶ Keep litter shallow and well-lit to discourage floor laying.

FEEDERS & WATER LINES

- ▶ Avoid placing feeders directly in front of nest boxes to maintain easy access.
- ▶ Position water lines near nests and away from litter to prevent hens from lingering on the floor, especially in the morning.
- ▶ Install feeders and water lines at different levels to encourage vertical movement.

LIGHTING

- ▶ Use warm white lighting instead of cool white during lay.
- ▶ Refer to breed manuals for appropriate light intensity.
- ▶ Maintain uniform brightness throughout the shed, using light strips in low-visibility areas while keeping nest areas darker.

GENETICS

- ▶ Consider genetic factors influencing laying behaviour, including heritability of oviposition timing, nest box occupancy, and learning ability.



For further assistance or questions, please visit
australianeggs.org.au or call **(02) 9409 6999**

