

Title: Controlling Vent Trauma with Stockwound Sprays

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Summary

In the absence of the outbreak of infectious diseases, vent trauma is most likely the biggest cause of mortality in the egg industry. Practical experience has shown that treating the everted vent of hens suffering vent trauma with a stockwound spray could rehabilitate these hens.

However, quantitative information was needed on any reduction in mortality, effects on egg production and other performance factors. This study was conducted to determine the effects of spraying stockwound spray on hens suffering vent trauma, and whether second beak trimming practices are necessary.

An initial experiment was conducted to compare the effects of stockwound spray on two groups experiencing vent trauma during lay. The aim of the experiment was to assess the effects of beak trimming a second time and spraying the vents of hens suffering vent trauma, together with any strain effects on mortality, egg production, feed consumption, average egg weight, egg grades, age to reach 50 per cent lay, body weight and gross margin.

Hens beak trimmed once only had reduced mortality when their vents were sprayed with a stockwound spray but there was no additional benefit when the hens were beak trimmed twice. Despite the fact that overall mortality was low in the trial there was still a benefit, for both strains, in spraying the vents of hens suffering vent trauma if they had only been beak trimmed once. Therefore, using a stockwound spray to treat vent trauma may be viewed as a substitute for beak trimming a second time.

The results also indicated that vent spraying improved egg output. Treated hens had higher egg mass resulting from both higher egg production and average egg weight.

The report recommends that there are definite welfare advantages and economic benefits in spraying rather than practicing a second beak trim. These benefits need to be evaluated against the cost involved in adopting vent spraying as a practice and the potential cost saving in eliminating a second beak trimming if this is routinely practiced.