

Effects of rearing on inappropriate conflict behaviours that predispose feather pecking and subsequent plumage damage, and cannibalism



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Cannibalistic pecking reduced thereby improving animal welfare, flock performance and uniformity



The objective of this project was to identify relevant rearing factors that affect the development of severe feather pecking and injurious pecking directed at other birds, using the free range egg laying system as a model for the research. To achieve this in a non-cage system, a model for eliciting feather pecking was required. The proposed model involved manipulation of environmental stimuli during rearing and prediction of the onset of the behaviour in the adult birds, that is during the layer phase of production on a free range housing system. The research findings will enable improved management strategies to be developed to benefit hen welfare and improve productivity of free range flocks.

