

## **Live Production Strategies to Improve Late Livability and Reduce Condemnations in Broilers**

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The purpose of a live production department can no longer be simply viewed as delivering live broiler weight at the lowest cost. Live production must deliver a bird that will process efficiently under various disease and management challenges at all times. The primary causes of condemnations that can be influenced by the broiler growout team include Sep/Tox, Inflammatory Process (I.P), Airsacculitis, and Contamination (Feed Withdrawal).

Inflammatory Process is a disposition caused by scratches contaminated with *E. coli* bacteria. Given that *E. coli* is ubiquitous in the poultry house environment, the primary focus of IP reduction has been centered around reducing scratching from occurring in broiler flocks. Certainly bird density is a critical factor, but conditions which create artificially high densities at the feeder level create the bulk of IP problems. To troubleshoot IP problems, a systematic way of determining actual feeder space density during all segments of a broiler growout must be developed. Another factor is management of feed space during the last 2 weeks of the flock, when the bulk of IP lesions that will be present at processing will occur (Alfonso et. al. 2005). Ensuring that feed outages do not occur during this period is especially critical.

Another challenge that has been created for live production is raising broilers to higher market weights while not sacrificing broiler livability. Common causes of late broiler mortality include metabolic/cardiovascular and structural/lameness. Other less common or sporadic causes may include gangrenous dermatitis or airsacculitis. One way in which late metabolic or structural derangements can be averted is through modifying the growth curve of broilers. The most common method of accomplishing this is through use of lighting programs to restrict growth early in the growout cycle. Mortality and feed conversion benefits have been demonstrated using lighting programs during days 7-35 of a growout cycle versus no light restriction (Beker et. al. 2005). Other causes and preventative management of late mortality in broilers will be discussed.