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J. W. Goble

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Nebraska
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK
IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS

U. of N. Agr. College & U. S. Dept. of Agr. Cooperating
H. G. Gould, Acting Director, Lincoln

ARTIFICIAL LIGHTS FOR LAYING HENS

By

J. W. Goble

Artificial lights may be used to stimulate egg production. The use of lights has very slight or no effect upon the yearly egg production, however, it is valuable in shifting production. Under usual conditions, the highest level of production is in the spring. By using lights it is possible to materially increase production in the late fall and winter months when the market supply of eggs is lower and the price is higher. For this reason the use of artificial lights is recommended.

Lights should be turned on hens preferably in October and used until March. The birds should have a day of 13 hours in length. For example, if there were 10 hours of daylight, artificial lights would be needed for 3 hours.

Most authorities agree that morning lights are the most satisfactory, thereby eliminating the need of a dimming device which adds to the initial cost of lighting. If evening lights are used, the lights must be dimmed prior to turning off to simulate the approach of darkness so as not to interfere with the birds eating and sleeping habits. The use of morning light overcomes this problem.

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One light containing a 40-watt bulb should be used for each 200 square feet of floor space. Each light should have a reflector 4" deep and 16" in diameter. The lights should be installed in a straight line midway between the front of the roosts and the front of the house. They should hang 6 feet above the floor with feeders and waterers placed directly beneath them.

Time switches are available from electrical supply dealers. Installation instructions are usually included with each switch by the manufacturer.

Producers often wonder whether the return from the use of lights justifies the cost of installation and charges for electricity. Most authorities agree that the higher prices received for eggs in the seasons of lower production justify the use of lights to increase production in those periods of higher prices.