



Feed additive reduces consumption

Broadhey Egg were given the green light this month to increase the size of its existing free range poultry sheds from 48,000 to 64,000.

Action groups have been apposing plans to increase the size of the unit and told the Ranger it was worrying how many similar expansions were taking place in the Shropshire countryside in all the poultry sectors.

Applicants Broadhay Eggs Ltd confirmed that the new poultry unit would have given scope for further employment.

Farm owner Andrew Hollins told the

Ranger that planning permission was applied for over one year ago and there were no plans to increase bird numbers until the market had improved.

Andrew Hollins told the Ranger “One and a half million pounds doesn’t sound a lot when you say it quickly” standing proudly in front of his 2 year old poultry unit. Three large sheds, each housing 16,000 layers are made of low maintenance plastic coated steel, finished in green. The whole site located near Whitchurch Shropshire looks extremely soothing to the eye, and is very tidy in overall appearance.

The sheds were manufactured and erected by Morspan Buildings of

Monmouth, with Collinsons PLC of Lancashire supplying the feed bins. Internal equipment namely feeding lines nest boxes etc were manufactured by Big Dutchman and supplied by Newquip of North Yorkshire.

Andrew has been with Lloyds Animal Feeds of Oswestry Shropshire for 20 years, specializing in poultry and now is a joint owner of his own layer enterprise as well. The layers have access to the fresh air with outdoor access and kept in a multi tier free range system, which naturally meets the 2012 EU welfare requirements. Referring to the housing changes Andrew commented that the UK had 21million birds in battery cages and it has cost £385 million to change to



Farm owner Andrew Hollins

colony cages, which is a substantial amount of money.

The layers are Lohmann Browns and the pullets were supplied by County Fresh Pullets, a subsidiary of Lloyds Feeds. An all-in all-out policy is operated and the birds are now 61 weeks old.

It's vital in any livestock business to have a reliable secure outlet, and Andrew's business has a flock contract for the eggs with Sunrise Egg Packers in Leicestershire, who supply a wide range of retail and catering outlets. Feed is supplied in meal form by Lloyds and hauled 20 miles to the farm. At the end of the laying cycle the houses are cleaned out with a downtime of just 7 days.

The company does have 80 acres (33ha) of land surrounding the sheds, but the manure is not spread on this area. Instead it's sold to local arable farmers and disposed of further away, minimizing odours.

"Naturally, with rocketing feed prices any way that we can improve efficiency has to be closely scrutinized" remarked Andrew. "I was in Germany 12 months ago visiting a large integrated egg producers business DEE – German Breakfast Eggs – and was introduced to Arbocel. DEE were getting good results including it a level of 8kg/ ton of feed and I was very impressed with the product.

John Mackay of JRS Nutrition now takes up the story. "Arbocel is a non-digestible

fibre concentrate which has a very high water binding capacity which when added to the feed improves performance. Because of the gut fill effect it reduces stress and the knock -on effect is a reduction in feather pecking. Damp droppings can be a big problem with free range birds as ammonia levels rise plus foot damage increases as well. Because Arbocel is very hygroscopic it acts like a sponge and significantly this results in much drier droppings".

As a result of Andrew's visit to Germany he has been using Arbocel on a trial basis in one of the 16,000 bird houses since the birds started laying. Andrew commented that the trial birds eat less feed than the control birds but interestingly egg production has



remained the same, so the efficiency of egg production has risen. Another bonus is that the feather condition of the trial birds is much better than that of birds in the other 2 houses. I.e. less feather pecking, which is very significant given current concerns about animal welfare.

Initially when the houses are stocked, wood shavings are spread on the shed floors to absorb the dropping. Certainly the litter from the Arbocel treated birds was very dry and odourless, which is very important, as these days people living near to intensive livestock units are very quick to get on the phone and complain to the local council if they feel that their quality of life is being threatened. Sadly they forget that countryside smells are part and parcel of living in a rural location.

Andrew has calculated that the 16,000 birds on trial eat 3-4gms less feed per day than the controls- about a 1.53% reduction in feed intake. Feed is costing £250 per ton. The birds are on site for 350 days, so are consuming 1365gms less feed. Feed costs 2.5p/gm. Hence, savings / bird amounts to 34p, so that total feed costs savings for 16000 bird's amounts to £5440. Then of course the cost of the Arbocel must be deducted, to calculate the true savings. "The savings achieved on one house have been such that we are now giving all the other 32,000 birds Arbocel in their feed as the product has shown itself to be very cost effective under the present high cost feed regime we are having to endure. Anything that we can do to cut costs has to be a big bonus."

Arbocel is manufactured by the parent company J. Rettenmaier & Son, Germany. It is marketed by JRS Animal Nutrition which is a sales division of Rettenmaier UK Ltd. For further information on Arbocel and how it can benefit your flock contact John Mackay on 01737 222323 or 07802 597023



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