

EGERTON



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DIVISION OF RESEARCH & EXTENSION

Egg Production Pattern

Not all hens lay eggs at the same time

Hens will start laying eggs between 18 to 22 weeks of age. But not all hens in a flock will lay eggs at the same rate. Some may go out of production earlier. When you understand the egg production pattern of your flock you can identify the good layers from the non-layers.

What is egg production curve?

This is a pattern of egg production in a flock. It tells you the number of eggs laid in a given day as a proportion of the total number of hens in your flock. The laying curve has two cycles:

a) 1st cycle

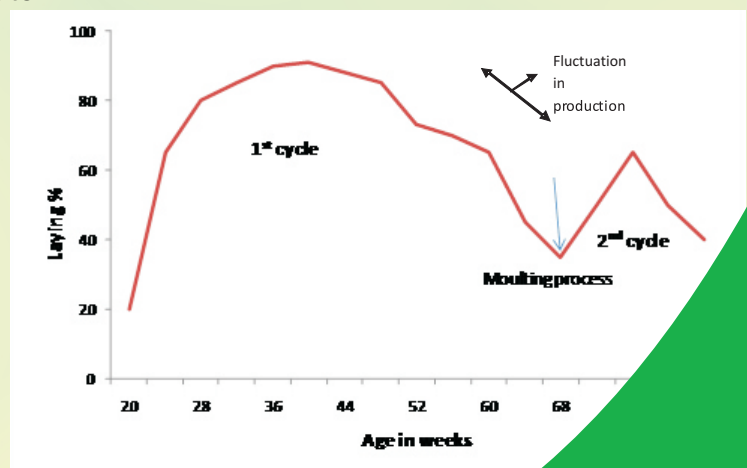
1. Laying peaks rapidly from the age of 28 weeks reaching a maximum of 80 - 90% for a period of 6 months.
2. Thereafter, production fluctuates as it decreases gradually. This will last for a period of 6 months.
3. At this point the hens approach moulting. This is a natural process in which hens shed off their feathers after one year of continuous egg production
4. The process prevents hens from laying eggs for a period of 4 to 6 weeks. However the length is dependent on your management practices.

b) 2nd cycle

1. Production resumes at 72 weeks of age. But it cannot go beyond 60% and will only last for a short period
2. When the production is constantly below 50%, it is economical to dispose the hens as culls for meat. Management factors that influence the laying curve
3. Rearing practices during growers phase
4. Provision of supplemental lighting
5. Provision of quality and quantity feed and water
6. Spacing in the house
7. Health management practices

How to identify good layers in your flock

1. Good layers have ruffled feathers
2. They lose yellow pigment from vent, eyelid, ear, beak and legs
3. You can place your two fingers between their pubic bones and four fingers between their pubic and breast bones
4. They have a wide, moist, oval and warm vent
5. They moult late, normally after 12 months of production



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