Developing Countries Farm Radio Network

Pack 13, Item 2

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**Sanitation, a key to good poultry management** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Information on this subject area was requested by DCFRN participants in Argentina, Bolivia, Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Ghana, Lesotho, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Maldives, Mozambique, Netherlands Antilles, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Philippines, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, and Uruguay.

Presenter: Glenn Powell

**Special note**

Before using the information in this item, please read the notes at the end concerning related items.

**Suggested introduction**

We at this radio station are part of a worldwide information network that gathers farming information from developing countries all over the world. It's the Developing Countries Farm Radio Network, sponsored by the Canadian International Development Agency, Massey Ferguson, and the University of Guelph.

Through this Network, we bring you information on ways to increase food supplies for your family, or to sell—ways that other farmers have used successfully.

Today, let's think about sanitation, one of the keys to good poultry management. Here's Glenn Powell.

**POWELL:** While some people let their chickens run loose wherever they want to go, others keep them in a building all the time. Today, I'm going to talk about keeping them in a chicken house, and about some important rules for keeping chickens healthy if you keep them in a chicken house.

Now one thing that anyone who keeps chickens like this must remember is that it's really not natural for them to be in a building all the time. And, because of this, living conditions in the building must be almost perfect. If they're not, your poultry will become weak and they'll get sick very easily, they'll produce fewer and fewer eggs—and they may even die.

Now I guess everybody knows that all feed and water for their chickens should be clean and fresh. But let's think, for a moment, what will happen to that good, fresh, clean feed and water if you put it into containers that are dirty. If those containers have disease germs or other things on or in them that make the chickens sick, of course the fresh clean feed and water won't stay fresh and clean very long.

So here's the first rule: be sure to keep all feed and water containers clean all the time.

But what about the building? And what about the litter, the straw, or other material you have on the floor that mixes with the poultry manure and helps keep the chicken house clean?

Dadi Mawazo is a Disease Control Officer with the Animal Health Department in Tanzania. He says that both the building itself and the litter can be sources of contamination for your chickens. Here then is another very important rule. At least once a year, or after raising each batch of baby chicks, remove the litter. Then, with soap and water, wash and clean up as much of the house as you can, and all of the equipment in it. It's a good idea to use a disinfectant to get rid of disease germs. You can use it on everything including earthen floors and walls, even on thatch. You should also use an effective method of getting rid of any insects that attack your birds. After that, when your chicken house is clean and dry, spread fresh clean dry litter on the floor.

There's another important thing about poultry litter. Dadi Mawazo says it must stay dry at all times. You should regularly turn it over with a fork, shovel, or rake. If you ever find damp litter in the chicken house, remove that litter right away because disease germs can easily develop in damp litter. A place to watch for dampness like this is close to the water trough.

One of the main causes of damp litter is not enough fresh air in the building. To correct this problem, perhaps you can do something to have more fresh air moving through your chicken house.

Now one thing you must be very careful about is to do everything possible to keep any poultry disease germs from getting into your chicken house in the first place.

There's a chance that germs could be carried in stuck to your feet, or to other people's feet. The germs could be brought in in this way from other places where chickens are sick. I'm glad to say that there's a good way of solving that problem. You can do it by having a big shallow pan at the door with a good disinfectant in it all the time. Then if whoever goes inside steps in that foot bath, no bad germs can get inside the house that way.

Other carriers of disease germs are rats, mice, and other small animals and wild birds. Be sure they don't get into your chicken house. Not only can they take in disease germs, but some of them may also go after your chickens or the eggs. There are many good methods you can use to control rats and mice, and if your building is well-constructed, birds and other small animals won't be able to get in.

Another way that disease germs could be brought into your poultry house is by using old chicken feed sacks that have been in some other farmer's disease-infested poultry house. And yet another easy way for germs to be spread into your chicken house would be by using old poultry equipment that hasn't been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

Now, a moment ago, I mentioned a well-constructed building, and lots of fresh air moving through it. That's something that should be thought of when the poultry house is being built because, with proper planning, you can have good air movement. Also, you should have plenty of light for the chickens so there's no darkness anywhere except in the nests where your hens lay their eggs. And finally, be sure that the roof is good and won't leak—even if it rains hard.

Now there are two more precautions that Dadi Mawazo says you should take to have a disease-free poultry flock.

First, if you have both baby chicks and older birds, keep them in separate areas. Each time you work with your poultry, tend to the younger ones first, then the older birds afterwards. This way, you're less likely to pass along any germs from the old ones to the younger ones.

Second, and this is very important, if you keep a good-sized flock of chickens, or even just a few, it's well worthwhile to have them vaccinated. This is really the only way you can prevent some of the most dangerous poultry diseases from attacking your flock.

A good flock of chickens is very valuable. You don't want them to get sick, and if you take the few precautions I've told you about today, you should have a healthy flock that you can be proud of and that will make money for you.

For our colleague Dadi Mawazo in Tanzania and the Developing Countries Farm Radio Network, this is Glenn Powell.

**Notes**

1. In this item, reference is made to getting rid of rats and mice. This subject is dealt with in several other DCFRN items. You may wish to use some of that information in association with this item. The items are:

Rats - DCFRN Package 2, Item 2

Rat Prevention - DCFRN Package 3, Item 3

Rats, Are They a Problem for You? - DCFRN Package 7, Item 9, Part C

A Simple Rat Trap - DCFRN Package 9, Item 1B

2. You might also wish to use information in other related DCFRN items on poultry in association with this Item. They are:

You Can Improve Your Poultry - DCFRN Package 6, Item 4

Bamboo Chicken Troughs - DCFRN Package 6, Item 9, Part C

Handling Chickens - DCFRN Package 7, Item 6

Feeding Chickens for Better Production - DCFRN Package 11, Item 9

**Information source**

All information in this item came to us from DCFRN participant Dadi A. Mawazo in Tanzania.