Computer modeling can be used to test the profitability of modifying previously determined 'molting dates.' In general, the age at molting is fairly restricted to a time period of about ten weeks. Molting much earlier than five weeks ahead of schedule tends to make the second cycle too long with excessive numbers of undergrades at the end. Molting five weeks late has the same effect at the end of the first cycle.

If these conditions can be lived with, early or late molting may prove advantageous depending upon the accuracy of your price projections. We've seen ten cent per bird improvements in income by modifying molting dates by only five weeks.

The computer offers the best way of making these calculations but they can also be done by hand quite easily. A simple form can be obtained from the author.

First, we suggest that you consider molting early when prices are expected to increase and molt late when you expect prices to decrease. In general, we would suggest that you look at this question when each flock reaches about 50-55 weeks of age. This will make price projections a little easier.

The single flock projection program of the University of California looks at all possible molting dates within the period ending with the planned sale date. Performance is multiplied by the egg prices predicted. The program is designed to yield the molting date which will maximize income over feed costs in the remaining life of the flock.

A simple form can be developed with the following headings: month, average hens, mortality rate, hen-day production, total dozens, average egg value, total egg income, feed consumption per 100 lbs. feed consumed, feed price, total feed cost, and egg income minus feed cost. Entries can be made by week or month. We would suggest you calculate at least three programs--5 weeks early, 5 weeks late, and your original program.
This concept is intended to be used within a previously determined time period and not to add on to the end of your original program. Adding on (keeping flocks later than originally planned) may prove profitable in the short run but long range profits may be adversely affected.

**CALIFORNIA POULTRY INDUSTRY SURVEY**

University of California Cooperative Extension staff are currently surveying all segments of the poultry industry relative to location, capacity, and production. This survey will cover the three primary commodities: eggs, broilers, and turkeys, as well as the allied industries: feed, hatchery, egg processing, and fowl processing.

As much as possible, we hope to conduct the survey on a person to person basis to assure a common understanding of the questions. All data will be kept strictly confidential with analysis emphasis on geographic distribution of our industry.

Layer inventories will be targeted as of December 1, 1983 to coincide with current government reporting systems. This will allow us to uncover instances of duplication or missing data. Turkey and broiler production will be based upon calendar year 1983.

This survey will be completed between now and June 1, 1984. Your cooperation will help us make the results accurate and meaningful.

If you have any questions regarding the survey, please feel free to call Dr. Ralph Ernst on the Davis campus (916) 752-3513 or myself on the Riverside campus (714) 787-4555.

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