

Flex promises 'consistency'

By Paul Van Boekholt, Hubbard

SINCE THE merger with ISA in 1997, Hubbard has been able to work with different gene pools on both sides of the Atlantic. The result is the Hubbard Flex.

The focus of the Flex is on "consistency and reliability" of breeders and broilers. It is always important to consider both breeder or broiler traits instead of just focusing on one.

Field results in the UK and Northern Europe show many benefits of the Flex package at both the breeder and broiler level:

- Good liveability
- Ease of management
- Good egg production
- Good hatchability
- Good uniformity of flocks
- Dry litter and a more active broiler
- Easy to catch and process
- Excellent bleeding and plucking
- Consistently better eviscerated yield

Hubbard is not necessarily aiming for the best results of a particular trait, but much more towards a good and



Hubbard Flex offers benefits to both breeders and broiler producers

balanced predictability of what you will get at the end of each crop. Consistency and reliability are crucial for the success of the whole production chain. Hubbard Flex standards are set to be achievable by the top quartile in Northern European conditions.

Reasons for extreme variations between broiler performances from the same origin is multi-factorial.

It should always be stressed that time spent in the early stages of growth

will pay dividends on the middle to later stages of growth. Once a chick is behind on growth for whatever reason it will not catch up easily again.

There is no substitute for good management, which means regular walking of the houses to assess temperature, ventilation, feeding and drinking and general bird behaviour and health status.

High standards on the following will go along way in helping broiler producers achieve above average results:

- Fabric of houses
- Layout of equipment and lighting

- Stocking density for the weight of birds required
- Careful blending of heating and ventilation
- Feed — quality and presentation
- Chick drinkers and nipples
- Chick paper amount and feeders.
- Hygiene at all times
- Regular assessment of birds

In conclusion, it is still the 'eye of the master' that assures the best result. Computerised systems and information technology can help to optimise management, but it can never replace the knowledge of an experienced breeder or broiler manager.

Hubbard Flex standards

Level	Age	Standard	
Parent stock	64 weeks	Hatchability	84.1%
		Chicks/hen housed	143
Broilers	28 days	Liveweight	1.328kg
		Feed conversion	1.46
	35 days	Liveweight	1.852kg
		Feed conversion	1.59
	42 days	Liveweight	2.401kg
		Feed conversion	1.71
49 days	Liveweight	2.934kg	
	Feed conversion	1.85	