

My Impressions of the Delmarva Broiler Industry



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Delmarva. Joe is a
wife of Southern In-
diana, a Feder graduate,
and former
E. C. F. instructor.
He is an week inter-
ested in the broiler
game that he spent
the week of his vaca-
tion the past summer
visiting broiler
growers and poultry-
men in the Eastern
portion of the United
States.

There was not the least bit of doubt that this was it! The long broiler houses, with their tile chimneys, were showing up with increased frequency in both sides of the road. At first it was just one house about every mile or so, but when we finally reached the very heart of the District, nearly every other farm had one or more long, tiled roof broiler houses.

We sometimes speak of our "southernized broiler territories" in Indiana and wonder whether that is a strong enough. You need to know when and where to look to see the Indiana broiler peninsula. Not so, on the Delmarva is that there is an area that has gone "all out" in broiler production. Over 100,000,000 broilers produced in 1945 typical Indiana counties. It accounts for about one-third of all animals produced broilers in the United States.

The country itself was fairly level. Similar fields of wheat were ripening as we crossed Maryland and then through the Annapolis area to the point Chesapeake Bay, and drove toward the northern Delaware. The soil was wooded—recently not sufficiently productive for cultivation.

In these short days of visiting, one can see only a relatively few plants, insight into the operations and practices of the industry, but I did gather a few impressions which may be of

The Delmarva broiler producers seem to be neither better nor poorer our own producers. The broiler movement as in common in Indiana. The rate of growth and feed consumption per pound of gain is comparable. The producers apparently operate on a smaller margin of profit per bird than is expected in Indiana, but they usually run more broilers per acre. They have decidedly fewer alternative opportunities than do we in the Mid-west who can choose between such enterprises as chickens, hogs, dairy cattle, beef cattle or sheep. On the peninsula, broiler production developed after the laying flocks had been virtually forced out of business because of locomotive and rail transportation had nullified the previous advantage enjoyed by the area in the early strawberry market. Delaware farmers still do a great deal of market gardening but poultry accounts for 75% of their cash agricultural income.

A number of the practices commonly followed in Delmarva broiler management differ from ours because the conditions of climate and soil differ from ours. It must be borne in mind that the peninsula is practically surrounded by the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. The climate is mild. Rarely does the temperature get down to zero, and when it does, it usually warms up to above freezing by noon, so I am told. The natives would talk a "zero" weather, but further discussion would reveal that they really meant freezing. Humidity, and hot weather are much worse problems there than is cold weather. The houses, consequently are almost flimsily built, according to Indiana standards. There is no insulation; no double walls. In fact when a cleaning crew throws a forceful stream of water against a wall of a typical broiler house, it is not unusual to see the water gushing right through the cracks in the wall.

Economy of construction fitted right in with what started to be the thinking of many producers who believed during the early development of broiler

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L. E. Williams
Secretary
1947

Yes, we were lucky in winning first place in the Indiana "Chicken of Tomorrow" contest at the 1946 Indiana State Fair. Our first-prize pen was an entry of Barred Crossbrods—Barred Rock males with White Rock hens. (We've been mating this cross for over ten years.)

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