

## The Egg & The Chick – Parent Stock Farms!

Lohmann GB parent stock farms are a key influencer in the product that we supply but generally producers know very little of where it all starts with the pullets they have on farm. Lohmann GB are very proud of the farms that house the parents of the birds you see on farm from the standard of the chick they produce to the welfare and biosecurity measures implemented to maintain the required standards.



Ryan Price

Ryan Price is one such farmer who has taken on the challenge and satisfaction of housing and working with parent stock, this is only Ryan's second parent flock as before this he produced vaccine egg for Lohmann GB and their customers.

This specialist production meant that all requirements for the farm to house parent flocks were in place, this included a shower in and shower out system for all staff and visitors and the knowledge of working with male and female birds.

The Price farm is a new farm with metal buildings with plenty of concrete and stone to allow easy cleaning and control of pests.



General building specifications are similar to that of a 'Flat Deck' Layer House, with slats, nest boxes and scratch area, but the one main difference is that Parent Stocks do not go outside for biosecurity reasons.



Probably one of the main things that people are unaware of is that the parents to the Lohmann Brown 'Classic' or 'Lite' are not what you would expect, Mum is White and Dad is Brown!

Typically houses are 14,000 bird units, the pullets are reared on another site and transferred at 16 weeks, lighting patterns are similar to layer birds with birds arriving on an 8 hr day and aiming to be on 15 hrs by 22 wks.

The stocking of the house is controlled at 8.5% males to females to ensure fertilisation but minimise potential conflict between the males.

Egg weight is critical when looking to send eggs to the hatchery, they must be a minimum of 50g which normally occurs at about 24 wks, and by the time the parents are 64 wks of age egg weight will be in 60-62g.

Production levels match or exceed the commercial standards; the flock seen had hit 98% production at 23 wks with a feed consumption of 116g/b/d, a key indicator in the potential of the off spring to do the same. Parent flocks are also taken to 74/75 weeks of production, this ensures that when expecting commercial flocks to go to this or beyond then the parents can do the same.

As with all aspects of the Lohmann business support is key, Ryan and the farm are supported by Steve Bowen (Area Farms Manager) combined with the Head Office at Worcester.

It was great to spend time with Ryan and discuss the challenges and similarities between parent and commercial flocks with both of us agreeing that knowing more about the other can only but help in development and understanding of the breed.



*Adrian Marshall - TM*

## Genetics and Nutrition Update from Lohmann Tierzucht



LOHMANN TIERZUCHT continues to invest in the infrastructure of the breeding programme. Following construction of a new state of the art breeding farm in Canada in 2014 and complete renovation of a Spanish parent stock farm into a breeding farm, the next step for expansion was the development of a new breeding farm in Scotland.

This huge investment in the growth of the breeding programme and expansion of the testing capacity is a

big step towards safeguarding the future developments of genetic progress. Increased economic merit in the pure lines will be transferred down the breeding pyramid to grandparents, parents and commercial laying hens.

### LTZ Pureline Breeding Farm, Scotland



Of course, the breeding goals need to be defined as closely as possible to the needs of commercial egg producers. For this reason, the LOHMANN team maintains very close contact with customers to observe market needs and identify fields for further improvement of our birds.

Our selection priorities are:

- **Persistency:** the persistency of lay is economically the most important trait. The productive life of the flocks has increased in the past ten years by approximately five weeks, this means one more week of age every two years before flocks go to slaughter.
- **Shell strength:** longer life of the flocks can only be achieved if eggs produced at an older age are still suitable for grading, without too many cracked/broken eggs.
- **No later start of lay**
- **Liveability and Feather cover**
- **Nesting behaviour**

High investments in the breeding programme have been made to maintain the leading position of LTZ in the global layer genetic market. New breeding farms and further development of the genomic evaluation are the foundation of future development. Investments in additional cage and floor testing capacity have been made to increase the accuracy and relevancy of the testing results for an actual improvement of the birds' performance profile. There is a complete focus on efficient egg production and robust birds, able to adapt to the wide range of different environments in the egg production world.

*Dr. Matthias Schmutz - Head Geneticist*

Nutrition and optimal feeding management play a crucial role in economical egg production with high producing layer breeds. As well as the standard production goals that include laying percentage, egg shell quality and egg weight - nutrition needs to support birds' wellbeing, nice occurrence with full feathering up to the end of the production cycle and a docile behavior.

Historically the focus has been on basic nutrient demands such as protein, amino acids, mineral demand and vitamins. We have to go beyond this especially now as a beak trimming ban approaches in the UK. So we have to consider optimal feed structure and palatability, feeding according egg mass production (and not just laying percentage), support of overall gut health and the importance of non-digestible fibre.

Ultimately, we are being paid from the society who is demanding a healthy egg and good animal welfare feeling when buying an egg. So let's talk about it!

*Robert Pottgueter - Nutrition Specialist*

