

Cannibalism in Poultry

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Introduction

Pecking is a natural behavior of poultry that allows them to check out their surroundings, including their flock mates. "Though poultry pecking is a natural occurrence, the nature of this behavior can change when birds spend more time inside.

Understanding the difference between curious and aggressive hen pecking is key to knowing when there is a problem. Not all pecking is bad. When it is gentle, this behavior is fun to watch. If pecking becomes aggressive, it can be problematic to other birds in the flock".

Cannibalism in poultry is the act in which birds of a flock attack their pen mate and consume their flesh and other body parts. In general psychology poultry wants to be the leader of his own team.

So, when the poultry's lips start to get bigger, they are scared to see each other. They attack other poultry to make an impact so that no one can attack them. This is how cannibalism is usually created.

Types

Toe picking

It is more common in chick. When the amount of food containers is low and the children cannot eat the food properly so they attack the other child so that it can eat the food by itself.

Feather picking

Feather picking is more common among floor-raised birds and among birds in large free-range systems.

Usually, the hens pick up the old feathers themselves to grow new feathers which is called molting. Cannibalism usually occurs when other poultry attacks cause excess feather loss.

Head picking

Head picking is more common in in overcrowded poultry and chick. Poultry combs and wattles are usually damaged in head picking.

Vent picking

Vent pecking is an abnormal behaviour of commercial egg-laying poultry. Which characterised by pecking damage to the cloaca, the surrounding skin and underlying tissue. It occurs immediately after an egg has been laid.

Etiology

Improper food and nutrition

Poor nutrition or lack of proper diet can make the poultry more aggressive which can be a great cause for cannibalism. On the other hand, providing extra diet can also make them over-active which can lead to cannibalism.

Overcrowding

The overpopulation of poultry birds in a limited space can cause competitive behaviour, leading to cannibalism.

Excessive heat

Excess heat due to high temperature and poor ventilation can make poultry uncomfortable which can lead to cannibalism.

Bright light

If the power of the light suddenly increases or intense sunlight enters the farm for a long time, the poultry may become uncomfortable and this increases the chances of cannibalism.

Stress

Poultry behave abnormally due to stress, which can lead to cannibalism.

Suddenly adding new members

Suddenly adding new members takes time to adapt to their new environment they are scared and under stress which leads to their cannibalism.

Mixing of animal

Usually when animals of different colors or different ages are together, they can scare and attack each other which can lead to cannibalism.

Sudden change in environment

Poultry can get scared and attack each other if the environment changes suddenly.

Parasitic load

Parasite can influence poultry to pick feather by itself or each other which can lead to cannibalistic behaviour.

Leaving the dead body

If the dead body is not disposed properly, the rest of the poultry smell blood from them and start barking which can lead to cannibalistic behaviour.

Treatment

Cannibalism occurs for a variety of reasons, so in order to treat it, it is necessary to find out why it is happening and solve the problem. However, we can use anti-peck ointment to reduce the outbreak of cannibalism. We will also use antiseptic in the affected areas to heal the wounds. Healthy diet will help poultry to recover early.

Prevention

We can prevent this behavior in many different ways such as, darkening the environment, beak trimming, providing balance

diet, supplying fresh water, routine deworming, adequate lighting, proper ventilation, stresses management, keeping bird busy, adequate exercise, proper disposal of dead body. With proper management we can easily prevent this alarming disease.

Thread

Cannibalism is very dangerous for farmers, it usually reduces production such as meat production, egg production, feather production. As a result, farmers will suffer and will not able to make a profit. As we know that the main objective of a commercial farm is to make a profit, if it does not make a profit then the poultry industry will be at risk.

At the same time consumers will not able to consume safe food and they can be infected with various disease through these foods [1-4].

Conclusion

In conclusion, cannibalism is an alarming issue for poultry industry. We can prevent this disease by following proper management of poultry farm. Even then, outbreak of cannibalism, we will isolate it and make sure appropriate treatment for the victim. Since it is easier to prevent than to treat, we should focus on prevention.

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