

Beak trimming handbook

P.C. GLATZ

Pig and Poultry Production Institute, Roseworthy Campus, Roseworthy, South Australia, Australia, 5107.

E-mail: glatz.phil@saugov.sa.gov.au

Many enquiries on beak trimming from Industry are received at the Pig and Poultry Production Institute in South Australia from around Australia and worldwide. There was a need to consolidate all the information available in the literature into an easy-to-read handbook for producers as an educational resource to service these enquiries. To obtain information for the handbook a questionnaire was developed and sent to industry specialists with knowledge or experience with beak trimming or alternatives to trimming. The survey of experienced beak-trimmers, egg producers, and veterinary and industry consultants in Australia was undertaken to obtain practical knowledge on beak trimming and possible alternatives to trimming in Australia. The survey requested industry people to comment on the advantages and disadvantages of beak-trimming, bird welfare considerations, current methods, costs of trimming and methods to minimise use of trimming. The information provided by industry was used to write a chapter in the handbook that reflected the current state of industry knowledge about beak trimming. The handbook was produced to improve knowledge on why, when and how birds are trimmed, responses of birds to trimming, management of beak trimmed birds and alternative strategies to trimming. The target audience is farm managers. The “Beak Trimming Handbook for Egg Producers: Best Practice for Minimising Cannibalism in Poultry” was funded by the Australian Poultry Co-operative Research Centre and printed by CSIRO Publishing. The Beak Trimming Handbook comprises eight chapters which highlight pecking problems and cannibalism, beak trimming methods, training and Codes of Practice, welfare issues and industry views on beak trimming. There are 2-3 bulleted points at the start of each chapter to advise the reader what it is about, with a list of management checks provided at the end of each chapter. Brief supporting information to back up the management checks is given in the body of each chapter. The outcome of the beak trimming handbook project is a resource for farm managers in the Egg Industry to support the industry’s commitment to maintaining high standards of beak trimming and to support the Industry to use methods that do not require beak trimming. Utilisation of the beak trimming handbook will enable farm managers to manage beak trimmed birds with greater confidence, improve standards of beak trimming and welfare of birds.

Keywords: welfare, beak trimming, cannibalism, management.