

FLOCKMAN Executive Summary

Good husbandry lies at the heart of every successful livestock system and employs all the livestock managers senses—sight, smell, sound, touch and his ability to interpret what those are telling him and to react accordingly. **FLOCKMAN** is a tool which allows the stockman to accurately control the feeding and lighting programmes using information fed back to him from the birds under his care and control. See our Management Guide for full details.

Flockman can produce excellent results. **Average benefits (9 separate trials with 2.2 million birds) were as follows:-**

40 g LW: 1.77 tonnes factory LW: 1.01% less Mortality: 0.062 better FCR: 4.32 pence/bird more Margin over Feed cost.

How does it do that? **FLOCKMAN** improves feed efficiency by feeding the birds several times per day as nature intended instead of feeding ad-lib. This enables the birds to fill their crops several times per day. In the crop the contents are soaked, absorbing moisture in a warm environment and causing it to enlarge. The cell contents swell and the cell walls burst so that the protein and energy parts of the diet are released and are more readily digested and absorbed. In addition, the beneficial lactobacilli species, present in the crop, proliferate in large numbers acidifying the crop contents thoroughly and by competitive exclusion, reduce the number of potential pathogens.

FLOCKMAN trains the birds in the first few days to eat when lights are on and feed is available. Lighting is integrated with feeding using a special Dimmer so that lights come on and go off gradually, giving a Dawn / Dusk effect, which avoids stress on the birds. Feed augers are disabled when the correct amount has been fed. Feed in the pans is then completely eaten and the pans remain empty between feeds. This gives the birds a keen appetite so at the next feed, the birds fill their crops rapidly.

The dominant birds always feed first and within 5 to 10 minutes are satisfied, move out and sit down to rest. The next most dominant birds then move in and fill their crops and go to rest also and so on until every bird in the house has a FULL CROP. ALL birds receive a full crop including the smaller birds at the bottom of the “peck order” and so grow to their full potential. On ad lib feeding these birds don’t eat properly as there is always a more dominant bird feeding at the same time, which chases them away so that their growth is poor or they become deaths or culls.

The pans need to be empty for 1-2 hours before lights out. When pans are empty the big greedy birds which would overeat on ad-lib feeding cannot do so, they don’t put on expensive, wasteful fat, they don’t have heart attacks, “sudden death syndrome” become “flip-overs” or exhibit symptoms of Ascites.

On ad-lib feeding, it is always the best birds that you lose towards the end of the crop cycle. Leg problems are greatly reduced as the birds are more active with stronger legs and in general mortality is reduced, normally by 10% to 20%.

Each house of birds does not perform the same, and **FLOCKMAN** is unique in that it constantly getting feedback from the birds as to how quickly they are eating their feed. It gets this information by monitoring the house cross auger 24/7. The system uses this feedback to determine the quantity to feed depending on the birds’ age, breed and sex. The farm manager controls how much feed is fed by selecting the number of feeds per day. Those flocks that are growing very rapidly and eating fast are given more feed and thus every flock is feeding and growing to its potential. Other systems, which rely on weighing out feed or time clocks to run the feeders for periods of time, treat all the birds in all houses the same!

For the first time, feeding is now adjusted automatically using feedback from the birds themselves as to how much they should be fed. The birds tell us how much feed they need, we don’t tell them how much feed we are going to give them: the birds are in control, and we respond to what they tell us!

Benefits are **BETTER FCR** by 3 to 5 points: **LOWER MORTALITY** by 10 to 20%: **BETTER HEALTH and WELFARE**: a more even flock with less big or small birds: **MORE PROFIT** + 2.5pence/bird/crop.

The system comes with a 1 year guarantee, a site visit to ensure that local installation is correct and to train the Site Supervisors, farmers and their staff. An Installers Guide, a User Guide and a Management Guide are provided. Support is provided by telephone and/or e-mail.