



Professional Nutrition & Management Services

# Poultry- UPDATE

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## U.S. Egg Production and On-Farm Mixing

By Ben Dekker

In late November, I had the opportunity to travel to Northwest Iowa and spend part of a day with Jim Dean, partner and CEO of the Center Fresh Group. Seeing the large barns complete with on-farm feed mill had piqued my interest. The scale of agricultural operations in the US is **eye-opening**.

### Farm Size

The Center Fresh Group consists of Center Fresh Egg Farm, a 3.8 million layer facility complete with feed mill and breaking plant; Sioux County Egg Farm, a 1.6 million layer facility; and Hawkeye Pride, a new 6 million layer facility complete with breaking plant and inline feed mill. It also includes Sioux Center Pullets, a pullet raising farm consisting of seven 320,000-bird barns. There are roughly 250 egg producers in the US.



## Feed Manufacturing

The Center Fresh Egg Farm feed mill and the breaking plant are set up to handle 5.4 million layers. There is 1.2 million bushels of corn storage, and the mill can take in 25,000 bushels per hour. They are set up to dry corn and local corn farmers deliver wet corn out of the field. Typically in Northwest Iowa, they are able to purchase corn at a negative (\$.30) basis delivered in. SBM comes in at flat board price or sometimes with a negative basis of \$10 to \$20/MT. The corn is rolled through one of two roller mills and the feed is made to a consistency of approximately 900 microns. Mill capacity is about 76 tons per hour. The feed is all mash.



All feed tanks at the barns are on weigh cells so feed usage is monitored daily.

### Production Notes

Birds are currently 70% Hyline and 30% Bovans. They don't use Lohmans – previously, they experienced issues with dry matter of the egg. Since all the eggs are sold as “Egg Product” or “Liquid Egg,” the total egg numbers are not as important as total egg dry matter mass. Jim Dean notes a Lohman has less dry matter in the egg (22%) vs a Bovan or Hyline (23.5%). That translates into less marketable product per hen housed. Approximately 32% of all eggs produced in the US go into egg products. Center Fresh ships out 10 tankers every day, and product can go out as yolks, whites, or whole egg product.

The hens are all moulted, and live for 112 weeks. They aim for a 37 day window from 50% lay. Because of the animal rights movement, the

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feeding program during moulting has changed and this is always under adjustment. Currently, they are exploring options to determine if allowing the flocks to moult is still the best economic option.

The egg breaking plant uses a lot of water in the washing of eggs prior to breaking and this water is stored on site and irrigated onto the farm with a central pivot irrigation system. The shells all go onto the land as lime. Manure is dried on the belts with relatively large blowers and is stored on farm as a semi-solid.

### **Barn Design**

The newest barns in the Center Fresh Group are designed to hold 616,000 layers - 308,000 on each side.



These are very large barns with a substantial air plenum in the middle to take in fresh air and distribute it to both sides. The air plenum also doubles as transport truck access for loading and unloading birds. The air in the barn is phenomenal, no scent of ammonia. The barn seems to have sideways tunnel ventilation, as the side wells have adequate fan capacity to pull the air directly from the center plenum. The cages are stacked 12-high with a catwalk at six. This was a very impressive steel structure with tremendous air quality and production capacity.

I really enjoyed being able to spend some time with Jim. BSC will be hosting a producer meeting on March 26 featuring Jim Dean as one of the speakers. This will be a great opportunity to discuss what he sees happening in the US, and to answer any questions producers may have about his experience making feed for layers. Jim is very active in the U.S. egg industry and is excited about meeting producers in Ontario. We hope to see many of you there.

## **BSC Layer & Poultry Info Day**

**CAW Hall, Talbotville**  
6688 Tempo Road (401 and Highway # 4)

**Friday, March 26, 2010**

**Lunch: 12:30 pm**

**Program: 1 to 4 pm**

**Jim Dean:**

***New Trends in the U.S. Egg Business***

**Stuart Boshell and Jeff Walton:**

***Canadian Perspective On-Farm Feed Manufacturing***

**Jim Dean:**

***U.S. On-Farm Feed Manufacturing for Layers***

*Please contact your Sales Rep.  
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