

Numeralla free-range egg farm 360 - transcript.

G'day my name's Pat Gallagher, I'm the Manager for Numeralla free-range egg farm here at Tocal College, on the northern edge of the college. Our boundary runs pretty much along Webbers Creek down here and then you've got the beef section starts there. On this farm we run five sheds, two of them about 150m about 19,000 birds in each shed, the other three sheds are 120m by 15m and their stocking rate is around about that fifteen four - 15400 birds. But shed five that's specifically made for egg farms, it's got the two tier nest box system in it and it's a bit wider than the other sheds it's about 22 m wide and we can have about 22,000 birds in there. Each shed has three range paddocks. Shed two is the only paddock with two range yards and they're just just over one hectare per paddock. They run through this way, pretty much most of the farm runs back to the west with the range paddocks.

[01:32] As you can see each paddock has the shade shelters in it for the birds. Some have natural shade trees and whatnot. Birds are just rotated through those paddocks. They're slashed when required, they've got to be kept short otherwise the birds struggle to find their way home in the late afternoon plus the birds prefer to be able to scratch around and see where they're going. As you can see they're reasonably happy out here.

[02:00] So birds are let out every day. Each shed has eight to nine fans at the end of the shed and the front of shed's got the cool pads, which are a cardboard consistency. Water runs through them and you shut all the sheds down - all the curtains - the ventilation is sucked through those cardboard - damp cardboard walls and sucked out the end of the shed so effectively it's just like a big air conditioner runs right through and that's how the the cooling system works in the shed other than days like today where it's about 30 degrees and you just keep the curtains up in the fans running in the sheds.

[05:51] Our water system behind us, they're the settling tanks, they feed the farm on gravity feed.

[03:07] Alright so let's go and have a look at one of the sheds and I'll show you how the systems work in there.

[03:09] So this is inside the shed, this is shed three, these birds are only 20 weeks old this week and they've just hit or very, very close to peak production. Their eggs have just gone to that 55-60g mark. In the shed you've got four drinker lines and two feed lines so you'll have two drinker lines this side of the shed, this side of the nesting boxes and two drinker lines the other side of the nesting boxes. One feedline each side as well. The water... it's gravity fed in through the shed through the regulators and fed along the shed. We regulate that pressure in the water lines with a little regulator at the end of line. The birds peck at the drinkers ... excuse me ... they just peck at those, you can see the water just drips off. You want those birds to have their head on about a 45 degree angle when they peck at those that helps with water loss and drips on the ground and whatever else. The feed line comes from a silo out the front, goes into a batch weigher at the front of the shed that weighs the feed and counts how many drops of feed come through so we can adjust and see, see what, what food they're eating. The water also has a water metre outside so we can tell what they're drinking.

[04:57] The lighting in the shed, you have two rows of lights down each side and a row down the centre. The lights down the centre are painted a red colour and they sort of indicate a sunset or a sunrise. So they come on 15 minutes before these lights, they stay on, these lights go out, they stay on for another 15 minutes then they go out and then it's dark. By that time all these birds will have sorted themselves out and gone up on the slats.

[05:29] These are what we call pop holes, so they, everyday at 11 o'clock, 10 o'clock eastern standard, those doors will get opened and those birds go out and free range into their paddocks, into the common area. And at 8 o'clock at night or roundabouts or when it starts getting dark, the birds will put themselves away and it's just a matter of going along and hunting any birds in that are still out, which is not very many and then shutting the doors.

[06:00] We have the ventilation, the cool pads are down that end, and you've got your main fan down that end. In the centre of shed you've got stir fans, those stir fans just keep the air circulating down through the shed. We adjust the feeders and drinkers, they're adjusted by winches and we wind them up and down to suit.

[06:26] This is the nest box system, birds go in here to lay, lay their eggs, they're on a slant, on a mat, a little bit like tennis court carpet and they go in there and like I said they're on a slant so the eggs roll on to a belt down the centre. You can open the boxes at the top just to check, make sure everything's ok in there and the birds are happy and they're not too full. That's your drinker system there and you've got your perching system as you can see .. that's what the birds perch on at night and they also perch on the drinkers - I prefer them not to but that's what we've got. And as you can see the nest boxes go right the way down the shed and right up the front. They're in banks, there's about four banks of nest boxes in each shed and they're checked twice a day ... the nest boxes ... end of the day they're checked for any eggs that haven't rolled into the belt and we put those in. And those eggs are conveyed out to the front of the shed onto the anaconda and down to the packing room where they're packed to be trucked away.