

Managing males for optimum fertility

Promote and maintain fertility throughout the life of the flock, by providing a sufficient number of good males in good mating condition*

Feeding

- Energy requirement is in relation to bodyweight (size/energy maintenance) and house temperature.
- Needs 90kcal/kg weight of feed energy per day, about 3.2% of his bodyweight in feed (grams), >30 weeks of age.
- Increasing feed when fertility first declines could restore the fertility (+5g).
- Ensure that young males (25-30 weeks) are not underfed or the flock will experience low early hatch %.
- For top quartile performance, maintain weight within 5% of target weight.
- Males need to grow 24g per week to maintain high fertility.
- Energy deficiency early in production could lead to fertility declines around 40 weeks.

Signs of underfeeding

- Low breast muscle score.
- Feather loss, pale comb and wattles.
- Rough and scruffy.

Achieving the right male weight profile

- TRUE separate sex feeding.
- Good quality and design male feeder.



Ideal feeder height



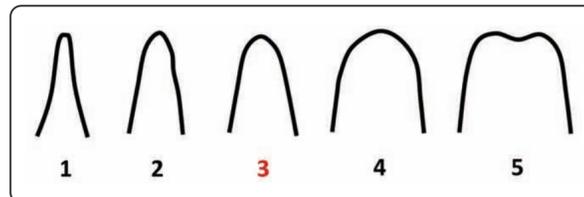
Incorrect feeder height

Condition

Bodyweight "per se" is not the only way to evaluate the male's reproductive potential. Body condition is also important.

While weighing males, look at:-

- Feet and legs. Ensure absence of foot pad lesions caused by poor slat condition or wet, poor quality litter and litter material.
- Vent area. Should be moist and red in colour with vent feathers worn, suggesting good mating activities.
- Comb, wattles, eyes and face. Should be dark red in colour with a waxy appearance.
- Beak and feathering condition (see pics).



Breast shape evaluation = field estimate of body condition. At 30 weeks, ideal index is a 3. By 60 weeks the male should not be more than a 4.

- Uniformity in males is as important as females.
- Maintain the male's optimum physical condition.
- Cull the males that are not mating.



Poor beak



Good beak

Male Maturity

- Cobb males are early maturing with high levels of mating activity.
- Ensure males are fully developed and mature to initiate mating and stimulate young hen development.
- Ensure synchronization of sexual maturity between the male and the female colonies.
- Do not photo stimulate males younger than 147 days.
- Do not allow males to become overweight at a young age: 4, 12, 18, 24 weeks.

Excess weight = heavier breasts = males more horizontal = more imbalanced = lower mating efficiency



Pale vent colour with heavy feathering (bad male)



Red vent colour with worn feathers (good male)



Good feet



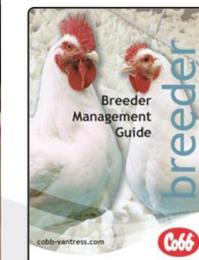
Good legs

Male Ratios

- Ideal mating ratio with Cobb males is 8-9% at 24 weeks of age.
- Minimum male ratio should be 5.5%.
- Ideal male - female body weight differential should be 600-800 grams.



An ideal flock has good wing resistance



***Please refer to the Cobb Breeder Management Guide for further, more detailed information.**