

Producer, Consumer Both Are Aided By Poultry Research

H. B. Hinds

In his annual report for 1917, R. H. Williams, Animal Husbandryman, stated that four breeds of poultry were being used for instructional work.

The Poultry Department was established in 1919, with Francis R. Kenney in charge. Professor R. B. Thompson replaced Mr. Kenney in 1920, and resigned in 1924. These men were pioneers in the poultry field at the University of Arizona.

A tract consisting of 131½ acres of land was assigned to the department and possession was taken in March 1922. Buildings were constructed and the of-

Mr. Hinds is a member of the Department of Poultry Science.

ficial opening took place the same year.

New Poultry Center In 1956

These facilities were used for instruction and research until the growth of the city and the demand for more modernized equipment forced the removal to the present research center. The move was made on January 12, 1956.

While instruction has been paramount, the research activities have not been neglected and are varied in nature. Primary objectives have been to find better ways to do things for Arizona poultrymen and to utilize Arizona products to the greatest extent. In general the research is divided into four phases: management, breeding, nutrition, and marketing.

Cages vs. Floor

Keeping birds in cages is a radical departure from the floor method. Managerial problems are multiplied. Tests showed that production is not influenced by the method of housing. However, egg quality may be affected. The incidence of blood spots, mottling, and thin shells was increased in eggs laid by birds in cages. Also, they were more susceptible to

environmental changes than were floor-housed birds.

The objectives of laying tests were to provide an unbiased evaluation of the stock of poultry breeders. For 34 consecutive years, the University conducted an official test, thereby permitting Arizona chick buyers to compare various strains under local conditions. Entries were received from all parts of the United States and the Hawaiian Islands.

Heat-Resistant Laying Hens

The chicken is very susceptible to heat. High summer temperatures result in decreased production and a decline in egg quality. The genetic approach to this problem is under consideration. Strains are being developed that have the ability to produce effectively during hot weather without sacrificing egg quality.

The breakout method of evaluation of egg quality has had a high priority in selection of breeding birds. Large numbers of eggs have been broken and albumin height measured, blood spots and mottling recorded. Since these factors are heritable, egg quality can be improved by selection of strains that excel in these categories.

Utilization of Arizona Grains

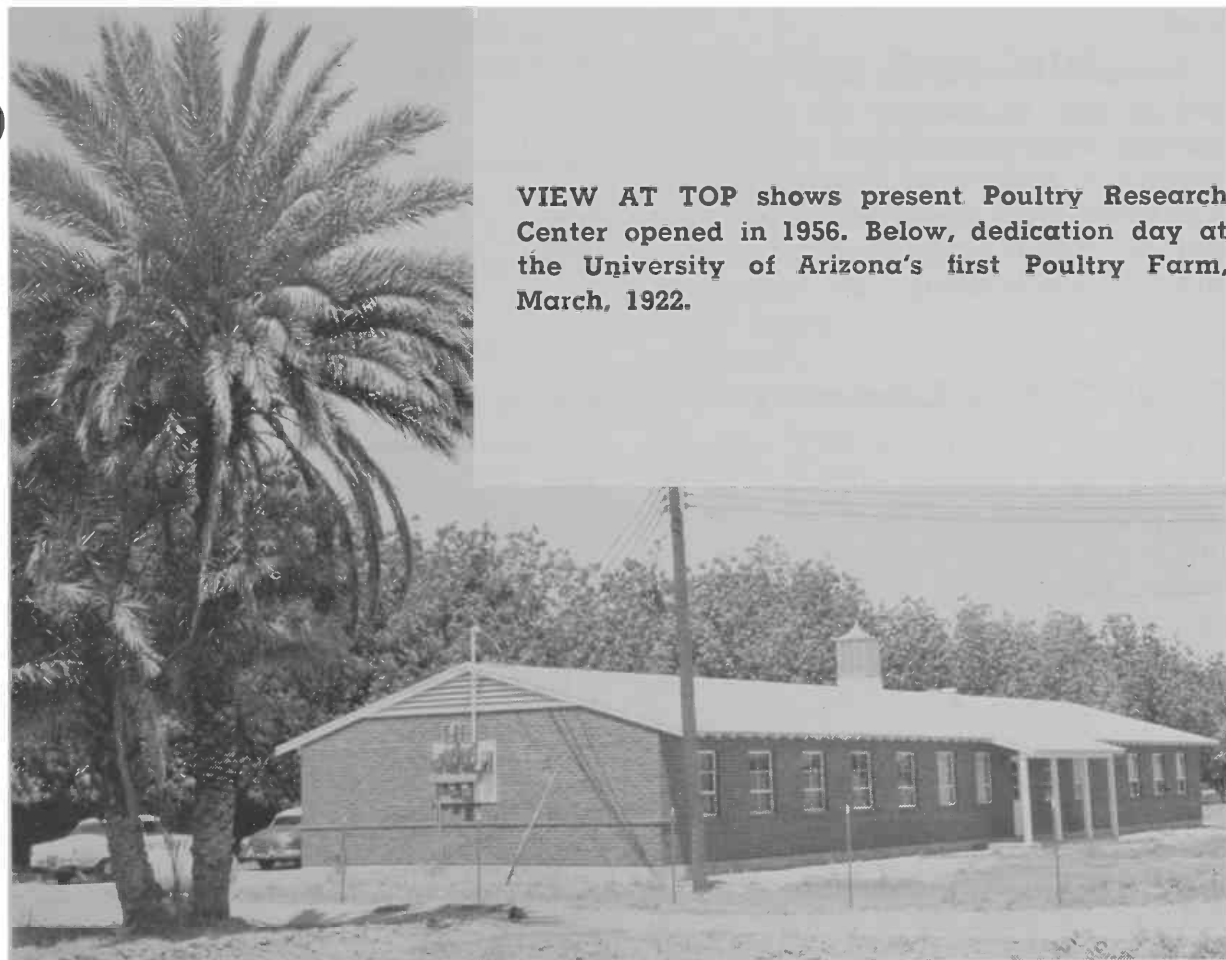
Milo was found to be a suitable grain for poultry with proper vitamin supplementation and now is widely used. Citrus Meal did not justify its use for poultry feeds. Cottonseed Meal is limited in its use, especially for laying rations. Work is in progress at the USDA Southwest Poultry Experiment Station to overcome the objectionable features of this material.

Parallel studies conducted at the Poultry Research Center and at the USDA Southwest Poultry Experiment Station showed that during high temperatures in the summer, laying hens may perform better when antibiotics were included in the diet.

Work at other stations confirmed the results of workers in Arizona that the level of phosphorus for laying hens could be returned to .4 - .5 per cent of the diet.

Egg Carton Study

Attractiveness and consumer preferences determine to a large extent the number of eggs purchased. Most egg cartons are unattractive. Tests were conducted in supermarkets comparing clear plastic cartons with conventional pulp cartons. Results showed that the plastic carton increased sales. A second test compared conventional cartons labeled with colored tabs. One tab listed the food value of eggs and the other was blank. Consumer preference was for the printed label.



VIEW AT TOP shows present Poultry Research Center opened in 1956. Below, dedication day at the University of Arizona's first Poultry Farm, March, 1922.

