

Protecting water supply crucial for any poultry operation

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Most poultry growers know the value of having a backup generator for the farm if the primary power source fails. Many, however, do not give that same consideration to their water supply. Failure to give the birds adequate water — even for a short time — can have dire consequences.

Backup water source

First and foremost, have a second source of water. A second well is the best practice but not always feasible. If that is the case, a large water tank is a good alternative. Whatever the backup source of water is, it must be capable of supplying the birds for an extended period.

Also, plan the backup source so that it can supply the poultry house with the maximum amount of water it may need. That includes not only what the birds drink, but also the water necessary to operate evaporative cooling systems in hot weather. For instance, an average 500-foot broiler house would use about two gallons per minute for the birds to drink. In warm weather, it might require another eight gallons per minute for the evaporative cooling system. This yields a total requirement of 10 gallons per minute at maximum use.

If the second source is a well, make sure it is serviced on a regular basis and its water tested for contaminants.

Backup generators

A backup generator is of vital importance if the main power source to the farm fails. This generator should be structured so that it automatically turns on when the power goes out; and it should provide power to all of the vital operations on

the farm, including the watering system, for an extended period. Make sure the generator is located in a well-ventilated area because it will give off carbon monoxide when operating. Also, ensure that the fumes do not get into the poultry house.

Alarm Systems

You should have independent alarms for all vital systems on the poultry farm. The best practice is to have a siren to sound if there is a problem, but also an automatic dialer to alert you if you are away from the farm. Ziggity recommends the automatic dialer contact more than one person. The alarm will not save the birds. It simply alerts someone that there is a problem that needs immediate attention.

The well pump should have its own alarm to immediately notify you of any problems at the well.

It also is a good idea to have an alarm for the water meter. The water meter merely tells how much water is going into the broiler house — water usage. It cannot tell you how much water the birds consume. By setting high and low parameters on the alarm you can quickly learn if there is a major leak in the house or if there is some condition that is causing the birds to not drink. You must adjust these parameters on a regular basis as the birds age, and you should test the alarms regularly.

Having an adequate supply of clean, fresh water is critical for any poultry operation. Even a short time without water can harm a flock's profitability. Producers need to take the precautions necessary to ensure there is no interruption of the water supply.

Ziggity Systems, Inc. is the only manufacturer 100 percent focused on poultry watering for improved performance. For more information, write Ziggity Systems,

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