

## **Cage Management for Layer**

The use of cages for commercial egg production has become increasingly popular to the point that today, it is estimated that over 75% of the world's commercial table-egg-producing flock are kept in cages (Bell, 1995). In the United States, over 95% of the layers are in cages (Bell, 1993). The remainder includes flocks managed on combinations of litter and slatted or wire floors and the production of free-range eggs.

### **Laying cages**

As popular as cages are, there are still problems associated with their use. Advantages and disadvantages include:

#### ***Advantages:***

1. It is easier to observe and care for the birds, no birds are underfoot.
2. Birds are separated from their feces thus providing a more sanitary environment.
3. Floor eggs are eliminated.
4. Eggs are eliminated.
5. Culling and handling are expedited.
6. Chickens in cages consume less feed.
7. Broodiness is eliminated.
8. More birds can be placed in a given house.
9. Internal parasites and certain other disease problems
10. Labor requirements are reduced and working condition usually better

#### ***Disadvantages***

1. The investment per bird is usually higher.
2. The handling of manure can be a problem.
3. Flies are generally a greater nuisance.
4. Eggs from caged hens usually have a higher incidence of blood spots .
5. The bones of caged layers are usually more fragile and are more easily broken.