

BEHAVIOUR AND WELFARE OF HENS

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Summary. The present article discusses some aspects of the ethology of hens in battery cages and broilers reared intensively indoors as well as hen welfare problems. The author of the article collected information about great shortcomings of modern intensive poultry farm systems. Laying hens and broilers suffer from painful physical injuries and many of hen behavioural needs are not met. Evidence is produced that de-beaking (amputation of beak) of hens impacts on hens welfare and results in significant changes in the behaviour of the birds. The author suggests a different poultry farm system – free-range keeping of hens.

Keywords: ethology, broilers, hens in battery cages, welfare, stress, cannibalism, de-beaking, free-range keeping.