

Effects of skip a day (SAD) feeding regime during rearing on the subsequent laying performance of Black Harco hens

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Abstract

One hundred and fifty (150) black harco pullets were used in a study designed to investigate the effects of Skip A Day (SAD) feeding regimen during rearing on their laying performance. Pullets from a healthy stock were randomly allocated into five experimental groups at 12 weeks of age. Birds in group 1 were fed ad libitum daily, while those in groups 2, 3, 4 and 5 were subjected to SAD feeding regimen for 2, 4, 6 and 8 weeks, respectively. Hens in all groups were thereafter fed ad libitum during a 30-week laying period. Birds in all treatment groups had unrestricted access to water before, during and after the period of feed restriction. Results at the end of the experiment showed that total number of eggs laid as well as Hen Day Production (HDP%) were significantly highest in hens previously subjected to SAD feeding for 6 weeks during rearing ($p < 0.05$). Although feed intakes of pullets were significantly reduced by subjecting pullets to periods ranging from 2 – 8 weeks of SAD feeding during rearing ($p < 0.05$), feed intakes during laying period were not significantly affected ($p > 0.05$). However, feed per dozen egg as well as cost per dozen egg were significantly reduced among hens previously subjected to either 6 or 8 weeks of SAD feeding during rearing ($p < 0.05$). Egg weight as well as egg diameter were similar among hens in all dietary treatments ($p > 0.05$). SAD feeding programme did not significantly affect hens livability ($p > 0.05$). It was concluded that, subjecting black harco hens to SAD feeding for 6 weeks during rearing period in place of ad libitum feeding, could improve laying efficiency.

Keywords: Harco pullets, Skip a Day, ad libitum, Hen Day Production, Cost/ dozen egg, Feed/ dozen egg

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