

**American Association of Avian Pathologists Position Statement on  
Induced Molting of Laying Chickens**

Induced molting of laying chickens simulates, under controlled conditions, the natural seasonal molting process in which birds substantially reduce their feed intake, cease egg production, and replace their plumage. Induced molting extends the productive life of commercial chicken flocks, improves long-term flock health and performance, and results in a substantial reduction in the number of chickens needed to produce the nation's egg supply. When birds return to full feed, a new plumage develops and the birds resume egg production at a higher rate and better quality than before molt. Molting also has a positive impact on the environment through reduction of waste and natural resources needed for egg production.

The commercial molting procedure is carefully monitored and controlled. Acceptable practices include reduction of photoperiod "day length", and dietary restrictions that result in cessation of egg production, but withdrawal of water should not be practiced. Intermittent feeding or low nutrient-density diets are recommended as alternatives to total feed withdrawal. Eggs produced during and immediately following the molt period should be pasteurized. The welfare of the birds should be a major consideration in this and any management practice.

The AAAP (AVMA) encourages ongoing research into the effect of various methods of molting on the performance and well being of laying chickens.

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