

Disaster Relief

Sanitize Poultry Drinking Water

Pure water is essential for poultry health and production. Contaminated drinking water may cause lowered egg production or occasional mild diarrhea, especially in caged hens.

Sodium hypochlorite, commonly used as laundry bleach, is effective in sanitizing poultry drinking water. Hypochlorite sanitation—called superchlorination—helps control problems associated with contaminated drinking water, prevent bacterial and algal growth in drinker equipment, and also provide some control of nitrates and nitrites by oxidation.

Hypochlorite is readily available, inexpensive, and safe. One gallon of bleach effectively sanitizes up to 17,500 gallons of drinking water with a chlorine level of 3 parts per million (ppm). Levels between 50 and 100 ppm are well-tolerated.

To control slime buildup in drinker equipment, first clean equipment such as troughs, bells, cups, or nipples. Then prepare a stock solution of 1½ ounces of bleach per gallon of water. Add 1 ounce of the stock solution per gallon of water at the input station for automated drinker equipment.

Avoid starting a flock on high chlorine levels. This could cause birds to cut back on water intake, resulting in lowered egg production. Begin with a 3 to 5 ppm chlorine concentration at the input station. Gradually increase to 20 ppm at the input station, a level needed to control drinker equipment slime accumulation. The chlorine residual at the end of the drinker will then be about 5 ppm.

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