

POULTRY RANCH COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS



Nine times out of ten, visitors to poultry ranches are not interested in seeing the chickens or turkeys. They usually come on business and only need to talk to the manager or owner. If there is no ranch communication system, these visitors have no way of letting anyone know they are there. They often have to walk around the ranch and into the poultry houses looking for the manager or one of the employees.

To prevent the spread of poultry diseases, only those who need to come onto the ranch should be allowed to enter. This requires fencing and locked gates, as well as a communication system so that the manager can screen all visitors, even VIPs. Those who need to come in can be asked to take the necessary sanitary precautions first.

There are several categories of poultry ranch visitors:

- Routine business visitors—those who deliver feed and pick up eggs.
- Non-routine business visitors—salesmen, veterinarians, repair and service personnel, and government inspectors.
- Egg customers.
- Friends, other poultrymen, and employees from other ranches.

Visits to the ranch may be daily, weekly, unscheduled, or by appointment. Regardless of who it is or how seldom the visit occurs, management has to be able to control all entry to the ranch.

To keep diseases from spreading within the ranch itself, it is also important to restrict all unnecessary movement from one part to another. This applies to the owner, manager, and employees, as well as to visitors. A system that makes communication possible between workers in different parts of the ranch and between the office and workers minimizes such movement.

REQUIREMENTS

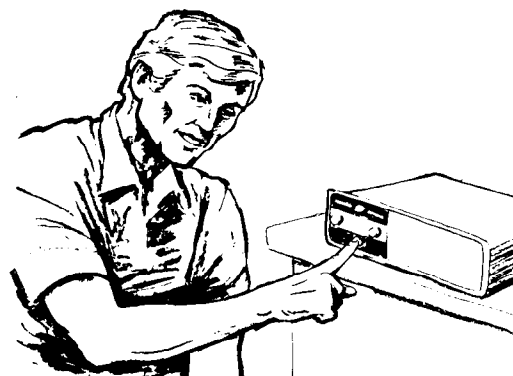
To control entry, the basic requirements are fences, a locked gate, a communication device, and a sign at the gate telling visitors how to reach the person they want to see on the ranch.

Communication Systems

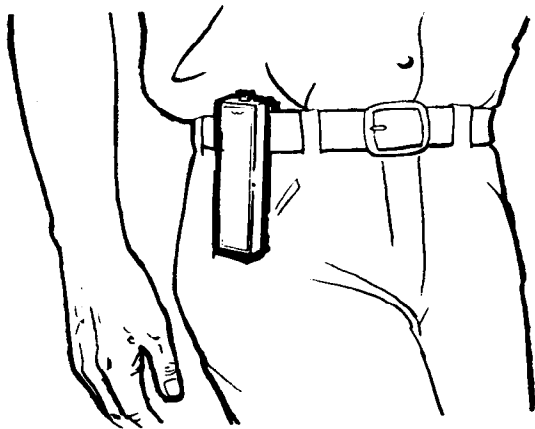
The simplest and least costly devices are horns, buzzers, or bells that are activated by a push button at the gate. Horns can be placed on posts at several locations around the ranch. Bells or buzzers can be installed inside poultry houses. With this system, someone inside the ranch has to go to the gate to see who the visitor is.



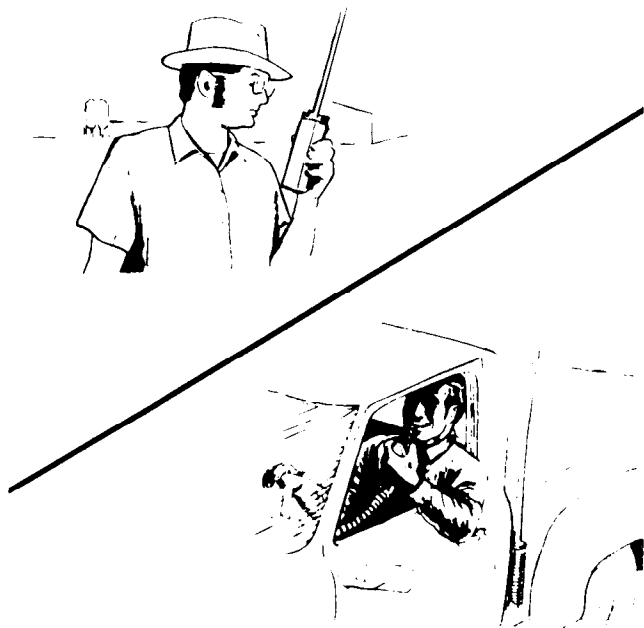
A second type is the two-way speaker system (squawk box). It may have two units—one at the gate and one in a central location on the ranch. Or it may be a multiple-set system with units in various buildings and central control in the office. This arrangement is versatile. It can be set up so that the manager can screen visitors without leaving his work and workers at different locations on the ranch can talk to one another.



A third system is the belt-mounted "beeper." This device signals the wearer that he is wanted on the phone, in his office, or at the front gate.



Another system is the hand-carried or vehicle-mounted two-way radio (walkie-talkie). This equipment is more expensive but very useful if the manager has to spend a lot of time in his vehicle or if the poultry operation has several ranches.



A combination communication device and gate lock deactivator is excellent. Visitors can let the manager or office know they are at the entrance. The gate lock can then be deactivated from the office or other location on the ranch.

In the ideal setup, the ranch is designed so that the office is located at the main gate to allow office personnel to control all entry. This is common on larger ranches but it means someone must be in the office at all times. Poultrymen with farm egg stands could use their salespersons for this purpose. To accommodate this program and to keep poultry diseases from being brought onto the ranch, egg stands should be located at the main entrance gate.

Minimize Visits

In addition to installing a communication device, the ranch owner or manager should establish a certain time during the day when he is in the office or can be reached by telephone. He should also encourage salesmen to visit only by appointment. Most business should be conducted in the office or by telephone.

CHOOSE A SYSTEM

Analyze your needs and decide what best suits your particular operation. Companies that manufacture and install communication equipment can give you information on advantages and disadvantages of the various systems and their relative costs. Other poultrymen in your area may also have some suggestions. Whether the setup is simple or elaborate, effective communication is essential to a program of poultry disease prevention. Your profits depend on it.

This is one of a series of publications on Planned Disease Prevention, which includes all aspects of management to help prevent exposure of poultry to disease and to minimize the effects of disease. The publications have been prepared by University of California Agricultural Extension and Experiment Station personnel as part of a statewide poultry disease prevention project.

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Co-operative Extension work in Agriculture and Home Economics, Division of Agricultural Sciences, University of California, and United States Department of Agriculture co-operating. Distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8, and June 30, 1914. George B. Alcorn, Director, California Agricultural Extension Service.