

**The Changing Disposition of Fowl From U.S. Table Egg Laying Farms
1997 to 2005**

In the April, 1997 issue of this newsletter we reviewed the changes which had taken place in the disposition of fowl from the nation's table egg industry since 1992. During 1992 – 1996, average monthly slaughter rates had decreased from 10.57 million to only 7.54 million hens per month. An update of this trend indicates the rate is now down to 6.36 million hens per month (2005 est.). This, though, reflects the "official slaughter" associated with a laying flock of 285 million hens as compared to less than 250 million in 1997.

Table 1 shows the bird movement within the U.S. table egg flock for the 9 year period from 1997 to 2005.

Year	Av. Monthly Beginning Hens	Av. Monthly Pullets Added	Av. Monthly U.S. Slaughter	Av. Monthly Estimated Died *	Av. Monthly Missing	Av. Monthly Ending Hens
1997	248.1	15.68	8.75	1.61	5.02	248.4
1998	254.0	16.33	8.59	1.65	5.32	254.8
1999	263.3	16.68	8.78	1.71	5.64	263.9
2000	269.4	16.36	7.83	1.75	6.48	269.7
2001	275.7	17.02	7.53	1.79	7.18	276.2
2002	277.6	15.95	8.04	1.80	6.16	277.5
2003	276.1	15.58	6.37	1.79	7.38	276.2
2004	282.8	15.84	5.99	1.84	7.32	283.5
2005	285.0	16.52	6.36	1.85	8.44	284.9

* Mortality was estimated at 0.65%/month

In 1992, the layer population averaged 234 million while the "official" monthly slaughter rate was 10.6 million (4.5% per month). In 2005, the layer flock totals 285 million while the slaughter is only 6.36 million (2.2% per month) or half the previous rate. This reflects a major change in the destination for end-of-year fowl. Fowl processed in USDA supervised plants have decreased in number by 290 thousand a year, while missing fowl has increased by 422,000 per year during the last 14 years. Missing includes on-farm slaughter and composting, rendering, and live exports.

Figure 1 plots the monthly USDA slaughter statistics for the period 1992 to 2005. The heavy line indicates that the monthly slaughter has decreased from 11+ million per month to a level of about 6 million by 2005. Seasonal differences occur with January and April being the highest months and September and November the lowest slaughter months.

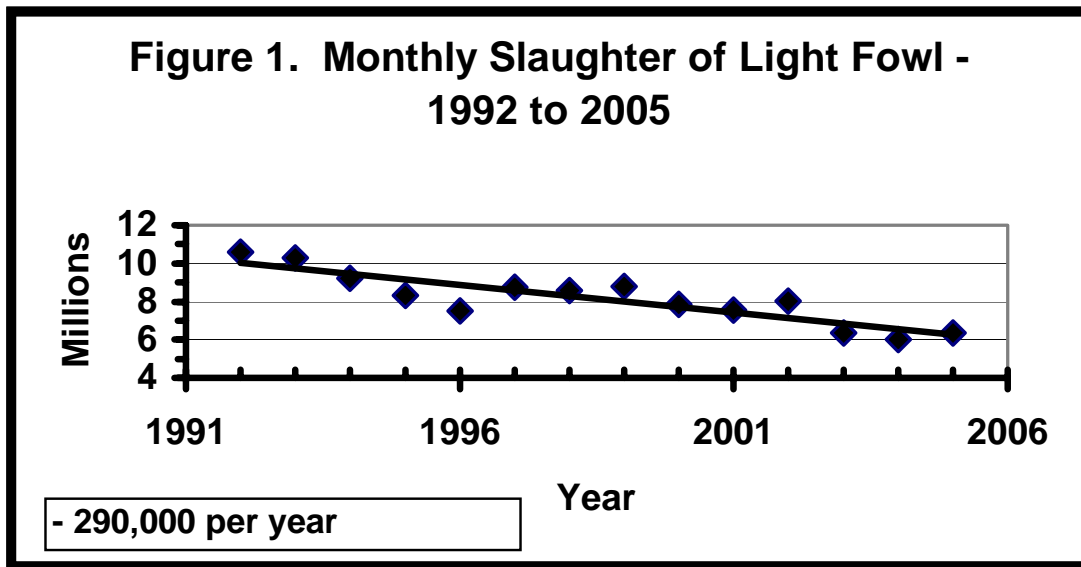
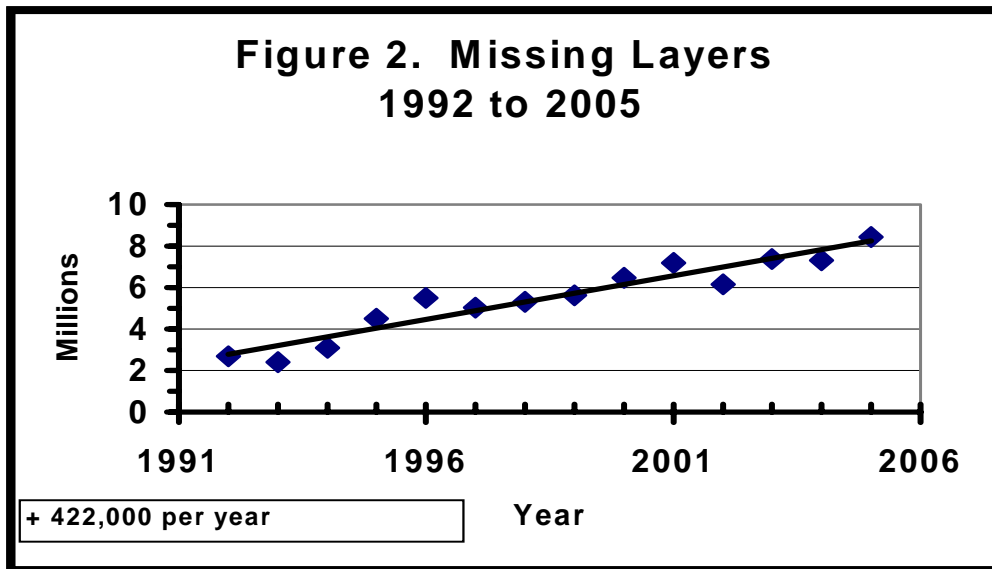


Figure 2 illustrates the increasing percentage of the hens that are removed that are not processed through traditional U.S. slaughter plants. In 1992, for example, only 2.7 million hens per month were unaccounted for while in 2005, the figure tripled to 8.4 million.

A significant portion of the “missing” category is made up of birds shipped to Canada for slaughter. It is estimated that this number approaches 1.2 million per month. The “other” category consists of birds slaughtered on the farm and either composted or buried and a significant number that were further processed in some form (rendered, extruded). The exact breakdown of this category is unknown. As indicated in Table 1, we estimated that .65% per

month of the average laying flock was normal mortality. This is equal to about .15% per week - a typical mortality rate for most flocks.



The missing categories have increased at about 422 thousand hens per year for the last 14 years.

Figure 3 compares the missing, U.S. slaughter and mortality numbers for 1995, 2000, and 2005.

Figure 4 represents the first 8-months of 2005 with data supplied by K. Looper.

Figures 3 and 4 show how the proportion of birds disposed of by different means has changed from 1992 to 1996. During this time period, the "other" category has doubled to 27.1% of the total.

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