PAST PRODUCTION HENS

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Evaluating laying hens

- Pigmentation
  - Skin has xanthophyll pigment, which it mobilizes when producing eggs
  - Pigment lost (bleached) in a particular order

Pigmentation

Order of pigment loss:
1. Vent
Pigmentation

The vent of a good layer should be:
Bleached, Moist, Large, and Oblong in shape

Pigmentation

Order of pigment loss:
1. Vent
2. Eye ring
   Ear lobe
   Beak (corner of the mouth towards the tip)
Pigmentation

The good layer has no pigment in beak, eye ring and ear lobe.

Order of pigment loss:
1. Vent
2. Eye ring
   Ear lobe
   Beak (corner of the mouth towards the tip)
3. Bottom of feet
   Entire shank (front, back and sides)
   Hock and top of toes
Pigmentation

• Hens regain pigment when egg production ceases, as in a molt
• Pigment returns to the body parts in the same order that it faded
  – Vent, eye ring, ear lobe, beak, bottom of foot, shank, hock and top of toes
• Pigment returns nearly three times quicker than it took to fade.
Evaluating laying hens

• Pigmentation

• Handling qualities
  – refers to the condition of the pubic bones and abdomen

Handling qualities

**Poor:** Thick pubic bones, thick skin, hard abdomen (means fat in the abdomen)  
**Good:** Thin and pliable pubic bones, lean skin and soft abdomen
Evaluating laying hens

- Pigmentation
- Handling qualities
- Abdominal capacity
  - Distance between the pubic bones and the tip of the keel

Abdominal capacity

*Distance between the pubic bones and the tip of the keel*
Abdominal Capacity

2 x 2 finger spread
POOR
Abdominal Capacity

2 x 3 finger spread
FAIR

Abdominal Capacity

3 x 3 finger spread
GOOD
Abdominal Capacity

3 x 4 finger spread
EXCELLENT

Evaluating laying hens

• Pigmentation
• Handling qualities
• Abdominal capacity
• Feather condition/molt
Feather condition/Molt

Example of a one-feather molt. Replacement feather not yet visible.
Molt

Example of a Four-feather molt,
With the four new feathers visible.

Past Production Hens

Practice class
Hen #3

Hen #4
Placing?

*This class was placed 3-1-2-4 on the basis of pigmentation*