

New poultry flooring

AVIHOME LLC and researchers from the University of Maryland-Eastern Shore have conducted successful trials on a new type of flooring for poultry houses developed by Salisbury, Md.-based AviHome that reduces ammonia emissions and promotes faster-

Key Points

- Flooring allows bedding to dry underneath chickens.
- Preventing basic pH from developing works to limit ammonia.

growing chickens.

Ammonia accounts for one-third of the nitrogen that ends up in the Chesapeake Bay, the announcement said, citing a report from the Environmental Protection Agency.

The company noted that chicken house floors are typically covered with litter (wood shavings

and sawdust), which serves as bedding and absorbs moisture spilled from the waterlines and/or excreted through the birds. When the level of moisture is not managed properly, it is conducive to the bacterial and chemical reaction that produces ammonia.

AviHome engineers designed a

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cuts ammonia emissions

patent-pending plenum flooring system with tiny holes in it that allows the bedding to dry underneath the chickens, eliminating the need for litter and reducing ammonia emissions.

Through several trials conducted by University of Maryland-Eastern Shore associate professor

Jeannine M. Harter-Dennis, ammonia emissions were not just reduced but virtually eliminated.

Using more than 33,000 chickens, the trials found that the ammonia-producing bacteria need a basic (alkaline) pH to thrive, and the plenum flooring prevented the pH from ever going above seven

(neutral pH), which prevented the production of ammonia.

The chickens also grew 5-20% faster and were heavier, AviHome said.

The AviHome flooring is comprised of 18 in. x 18 in. interlocking squares made from injection-molded plastic. These squares

have engineered holes that allow moisture in the manure to be wicked away from the bottom. The squares are mounted on top of a mat of cone pegs. When locked together, the gap created between the two pieces allows moisture to travel through the floor and exhaust, keeping conditions drier. ■

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