

Influence of a Putative Appeasing Pheromone on Behaviour of Broilers: A Tool for a Better Understanding of Behaviour—Preliminary Results

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Introduction

In poultry, behavioural parameters related to stress have been extensively studied. Ethograms have been described, including many parameters, either in relation to welfare (Maria et al. 2004) or to pure behaviour (Roden and Wechsler 1997). Most of these results come from small scale studies and they are time consuming (Campo et al. 2000). It would be of interest to have criterion that characterize stress related behaviours in classical husbandries, considering the large number of animals in these situations. Correlations exist between behaviour in response to stress and physiological or performance parameters. This study addresses the most probable parameters that may be related to stress in order to build a scale including the most representative stress behaviours. An odorant analogue has been isolated on hens having chicks in natural conditions. Because it is chemically comparable to known pheromones, we may suppose it is a pheromone (putative). The starting hypothesis is that the pheromone analogue (called HOA for Hens' Odorant Analogue) has an appeasing effect on chicks and that the impact of stress should be lower in treated chicks when

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