

Effect of genotype and rearing system on performance of chickens

Summary

Intensive poultry production is associated with poor animal welfare and thus is increasingly condemned by animal rights advocates. In order to meet the demands of poultry meat consumers, the market offers products sourced from chickens kept in alternative systems which ensure access to outdoor runs to improve their welfare. However, the choice of such a system may make it difficult for breeders to obtain suitable material for rearing. Commercial hybrids are heavy birds with a rapid growth rate and good feed conversion, but are very often unwilling to feed. Therefore, much research is currently focused on obtaining the best genetic material with a slow growth rate.

KEY WORDS: genotype, rearing systems, growth performance