

## Watering Systems - Part One

by Dennis Hawkins

Automatic watering systems for poultry can be a life saver, but if they don't function properly, they can be a life taker instead. Imagine finding all your chickens dead because the automatic waterer didn't work. This would not be a pretty sight, but to be fair, not all automatic watering systems are equal. Some are clearly superior to the competition and most have their good points and their bad points. In this article, we will examine a few common poultry watering systems.

Below is a good example of an idea that sounds good, but just doesn't cut it when it comes down to practice. It is called a pop bottle waterer. It is made from cast aluminum and comes with a long spring that you are supposed to use to hold a 2-liter pop bottle firmly to the side of a cage. While this may sound plausible, it really makes quite a mess when you try to stretch that spring around a plastic 2-liter pop bottle - all the water comes out on the floor as the sides of the bottle are compressed.



Another thing that is bad about these waterers is that they don't have threads in which to screw the pop bottle in securely. The bottle can get knocked out of the little tray and again, all the water comes out. If you ever thought about getting one of these, don't and save yourself a lot of grief.

Now we go from the very worst to the very best - the nipple drinking system. Last month's newsletter showed how nipple drinkers work. This month, we will learn just why these waterers are preferred over all others for automatic use. If you look



closely at a nipple drinker that has been in service for several years, you will see that its closed architecture keeps the valve free of contaminants that are usually the undoing of most other waterers. Nipple drinkers have a very high reliability rate. The lack of a water bowl also prevents the bird from drinking contaminated water and eliminates the need for cleaning. The lower bacterial load means healthier chickens.

If you are interested in getting some nipple drinkers, the only place that sells them is Stromberg's Hatchery - 1-800-720-1134. The part number for the drinker is #ED1 and they cost about \$1.75 each. You will also need some rubber tubing and tees which are also available at Stromberg's. Since these are low pressure valves, you will also need to set up some kind of pressure regulator to reduce the pressure. That subject will be covered in a later issue.

The Little Giant automatic water fountain is one with both good and bad qualities. Its bad qualities include frequent failures and difficulty in cleaning them. Shown here is one that has been in service for several years. Because the bowl is difficult to detach,

and detaching is required for a good cleaning, the waterer simply goes without cleaning. Even with frequent cleaning, the valve mechanism (which is the same as the one used in a tire valve) frequently fails. In practice, the unit usually goes without cleaning which results in a high bacterial load in your chicken's drinking water.

## Classified

**Rate: \$1 per line. Members get first three lines free. Send check payable to PBCPFA to Rose Greggs, 8643 El Paso Dr., Lake Worth, FL 33467-1109.**

### FOR SALE:

**PBCPFA T-Shirts**, excellent quality, beautiful logo. Assorted sizes are available for \$10.00 Contact Richard Greggs (561) 433-8157. Don't be chicken, get yours today.

**Rhode Island Red Pullets and Cockerels** of various ages. Contact Richard Greggs at (561) 433-8157.

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**Exhibition Quality Guinea Keets** - \$3 each. Assorted pheasant chicks \$5 and up. Wood Duck/lings \$10 and up. Call Kathi Talbert, Joe Martin, or Laurelle Balog at 790-7870, 790-3821, or 753-2881.

**AKC Chihuahuas** (females): 561-967-6332.

### FOR LOAN OR RENT:

**Don't let your flock fall victim to predators!** The poultry club owns two live animal traps that members may use free of charge. To reserve your time to use one of the traps, contact our Property Manager, Richard Greggs, at (561) 433-8157.

### WANTED:

**Newsletter articles** for the PBCPFA newsletter. The deadline is the fourth Friday of the previous month. Submit articles to the editor by mail, Email, or in person at the meeting.

**Mille Fleur Cockerel** Call 561-967-6332.

The most common failure of the Little Giant is an overflow, so if you get this kind of waterer, don't mount it where it can cause flooding damage. Mounting is not simple and requires some basic plumbing skills as the unit must be hung from a piece of 1/2" threaded pipe. Then, about once a year, the unit must be completely removed and its brass parts soaked in Muriatic (pool) acid until the calcium deposits dissolve.

As far as its good qualities, the fact that it hooks directly to house water pressure is nice. A pressure reducing regulator is not required. All in all, this is not a bad automatic waterer if you can live with its limitations as described above. They are commonly available at many local feed stores for about \$15. If you get one, it helps if you mount it where you can clean it with the garden hose periodically.



## Trivia Contest

The June trivia contest was held at the July meeting. The chicks that were in the incubator scene in Dorothy's barnyard were White Rocks which was derived by determining the breed of the parent chickens. Ten raffle tickets went to Jeanette Robinson for the correct answer. The breed of chicken in the second movie that Dorothy took back to the land of OZ with her was mistakenly believed to be a Rhode Island Red by the editor. Ashley Robinson was the first person to have this answer and was awarded ten raffle tickets.

The correct answer to the second question was clearly shown to be a Buff Orpington and not a Rhode Island Red. Lee Salmon was the only one to have the correct answer, but because the editor goofed, and because the rules of the contest state that the editor is presumed to be correct, she was denied her prize. So therefore, the editor is hereby awarding her with an Honorable Mention for having the correct answer even when the editor didn't.

Below are still frames from the movie, "Return to OZ". When filming the movie, the directors used several live chickens, and an animatronic (robotic) chicken. One of these pictures is actually of the animatronic chicken. It has a flaw that gives it away. This month's trivia questions are as follows:

1. Which one of these pictures is really of the animatronic chicken?
2. What attribute is wrong on the animatronic chicken?

Unlike last month, this month both questions must be answered correctly in order to qualify for the prize of 10 raffle tickets. Write your name and answers on a piece of paper, fold, and place it in the bowl on the President's table at the next meeting. The first person to have their correct answers drawn out will be the winner. The editor is presumed correct.

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**HINT:** Don't let yourself be fooled by different lighting and blurs. Having the movie makes it easier, but is not necessary because the flaw in the animatronic chicken is obvious in one of these photos.

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## July Meeting

by Lee Salmon

We voted to invite Mr Hartzig to speak at a future meeting. He always has a dynamite presentation accompanied by lots of cute wildlife. Arvis is also going to contact Ritchie Maycheck of the Farm Bureau. Dennis has agreed to go on with the Handbook and several people have offered to help him with the project. Selling ads is what is needed now. Maryann is going to make us a winners board, exhibitors list board and Poultry Street signs for the tent next year. We have made a start in setting up some criteria for our sponsorship of area 4H Clubs.

1. Must be an established club for at least one year.
2. Must have a serious commitment to 4H and the Poultry Club.
3. Must be willing to help our club at the Fair.
4. Club leaders will furnish us with a yearly plan of what the club would like to accomplish in that year.
5. Submit a sign up sheet for volunteer work in the Poultry tent, with hours of work to be clearly listed.

We can discuss this again to see if we want to add anything else. A reminder that we will entertain nominations for officers in the Aug. meeting. Thanks to the Robinson family for the refreshments. Refreshments for Aug, Lee, Sept. Rose and Oct. Maryann. Have a good month, see you in Aug.