

Ostrich production is highly management intensive. Losses to producers commonly arise from infertile eggs, poor egg handling, and incorrect storage and incubator settings (temperature, relative humidity, and air flow). Early chick mortality is also a significant factor influencing successful ostrich management. Microbial infection of ostrich eggs, caused by contaminated nests, inadequate egg cleaning, and poor incubator and hatchery sanitation, results in low hatchability. Adequate breeder nutrition is vital for ensuring fertility, increasing the number of eggs laid, and ensuring good survival rates of hatched chicks. The producer must work closely with veterinary extension officers, health laboratories, ostrich producer associations, researchers, and other farmers so that ostrich egg production is moulded into a process of excellence.

CRAWFORD, R.L. & ANIMAL WELFARE INFORMATION CENTER (U.S.). 2004. Housing, husbandry, care & welfare of selected birds (quail, pheasant, finches, ostrich, dove, parrot & others). This publication is concerned with birds other than poultry and commercial production birds, although a few references to these may be included when applicable to birds in general. The publication is divided into six sections, as indicated in the Introduction. Each section then presents the references chronologically and alphabetically. The references cover a large range of birds from hummingbirds and finches to eagles, condors, ostriches and emus. The intent is to provide resource information for better health, care, nutrition, housing and enrichment to those utilizing birds for research, exhibition or as pets.


Since the mid-1980s, there has been worldwide farming of ratites, particularly with ostriches, emus and rheas for feathers, meat, skin and oil. Most of these ratites are produced commercially outside their native habitat. This has raised concerns about welfare, particularly whether birds are provided the five freedoms: food and water; shelter; health care; alleviation of pain and suffering; and the freedom of movement. This paper reviews the factors that influence bird welfare before hatch with breeder, egg and hatchery management and after hatch with brooding and rearing systems, stocking density, handling, transport, disease and slaughter. Assessment of bird welfare in each of the production sectors in the industry is based on how well the five freedoms are being met. The review identifies egg handling practices and hatchery hygiene that can have a major impact on the subsequent health of hatched chicks. In addition, feeding of appropriate diets, reducing stocking density and improving housing can improve bird health and freedom of movement. When the husbandry practice of toe trimming is not practiced according to the best practice method, chronic pain may result and impair walking ability of birds. Stress and injuries to birds can be reduced when birds are handled correctly on farm and in the lairage and are transported using appropriate vehicles. Farmers, transporters and abattoir staff can have a major impact on maintaining bird welfare if best practice farming systems and husbandry practices are implemented.


PERELMAN, B. 2004. Control and prevention of hatchery related infectious diseases in ostriches. Veterinarski Fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu (Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Zagreb), Zagreb, Croatia, Proceedings of the 11th Ostrich World Congress,
This article discusses incubator and hatchery hygiene and egg handling and disinfection procedures to prevent contamination and infection of ostrich eggs and embryos by bacteria and fungi.


One of the problems encountered in discussions of animal welfare is in deciding exactly what welfare means. An individual's welfare is defined to be its state as regards its attempts to cope with its environment. An ideal level of animal welfare is "a state of complete physical and mental health in which the animal is in harmony with its environment". Taken together, the two critical components of welfare - physical health and mental or psychological health of the animal - define the "quality of life" or level of welfare the animal experiences. Animal welfare refers to how well an animal is coping both with its environment and with the way it is being managed. When an animal's major needs are being met its welfare is good. Animal welfare science is a dynamic and growing discipline, especially in avian species. Recently ostrich production increased in many countries and welfare of this species is a new subject. The most common welfare problem occurs during catching, transport and slaughter of ostriches. These procedures results in stress and fear responses in the birds. The poor conditions can all be causes poor welfare. In this review is given some information about welfare in management practices for ostrich. In addition, the importance of welfare during handling, catching, transportation, stunning and slaughter of ostriches are also discussed.


This article presents ratite farming and the European Convention on Production of Animals kept for Farming Purposes adopted by the Czech Republic. Among ratites, the ostrich is the most commonly farmed. The lifespan, biology, feeding, behaviour, breeding, handling, farming, and slaughter of ostrich, emus, and rheas are discussed. Regulations followed in the Czech Republic concerning the welfare of these ratites are also discussed.


A study of the commercial stunning and slaughter of 783 ostriches in a Republic of South African abattoir revealed that a simple ostrich handling system, combined with a leg clamp applied during stunning current flow and operated by experienced ostrich slaughtermen, resulted in a humane, efficient slaughter process. It was estimated that an electrical stunning current in excess of 400 milliamps at 50 Hz AC, applied to the head only, would prevent recovery in more than 90% of the ostriches, when bled within 60 s from the start of stunning. The identification of rhythmic breathing movements indicate the first stages of recovery and is therefore an essential diagnostic 'tool' in recognising the effectiveness of the stunning treatment. The identification of rhythmic breathing movements in the ostrich after stunning is difficult because spinal reflexes, which produce contraction of limb muscles and result in almost rhythmic body movements could easily be confused with breathing movements.