

MSc Defence

Relative preference for pecking blocks and its association with keel status and eggshell quality in White and Brown-feathered laying hens housed in enriched cages

Tunmise Faith Ehigbor

Date: August 20th 2024 at 9:00am

The MSc Defence for Tunmise Faith Ehigbor has been scheduled for August 20th, 2024 at 9:00am. The defence will be held online via Teams and in room 141: https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_ZGE3ZDEzMmYtMzUzMi00MWE2LWJkZDItZDBhNTA0YzIxOWZh%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22be62a12b-2cad-49a1-a5fa-85f4f3156a7d%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22fbd28915-dda5-478f-8ecb-a3682dcf0c3a%22%7d

The exam committee will consist of:

Examining Chair: Dr. Wendy Pearson

Advisor: Dr. Tina Widowski

Advisory Committee Member: Dr. Elijah Kiarie

Additional Committee Member: Dr. Trevor DeVries

Abstract:

This research aimed to determine (1) the relative preference for three commercially available pecking blocks differing in nutritional and sensory composition in White and Brown-feathered strains of laying hens housed in enriched cages, and (2) explore the association between pecking block preference, use, keel status, and eggshell quality. The two common strains of laying hens in this study preferred different types of pecking blocks and used them at different times of day. This study also showed that individual hens have distinct choices/variations regarding pecking block preference, and it will likely stay the same as they age. Although preference for a specific pecking block was not linked to keel bone fracture status or eggshell quality, pecking block use was associated with eggshell thickness and breaking strength. These results suggest that the use of edible enrichment in laying hens should be strain-specific, and pecking block use may improve eggshell quality.