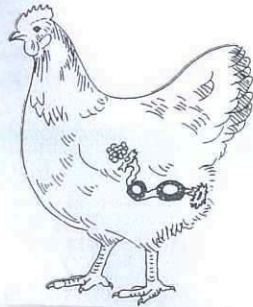


EGG PRODUCTION

We need to begin this study by looking at how hens lay their eggs.

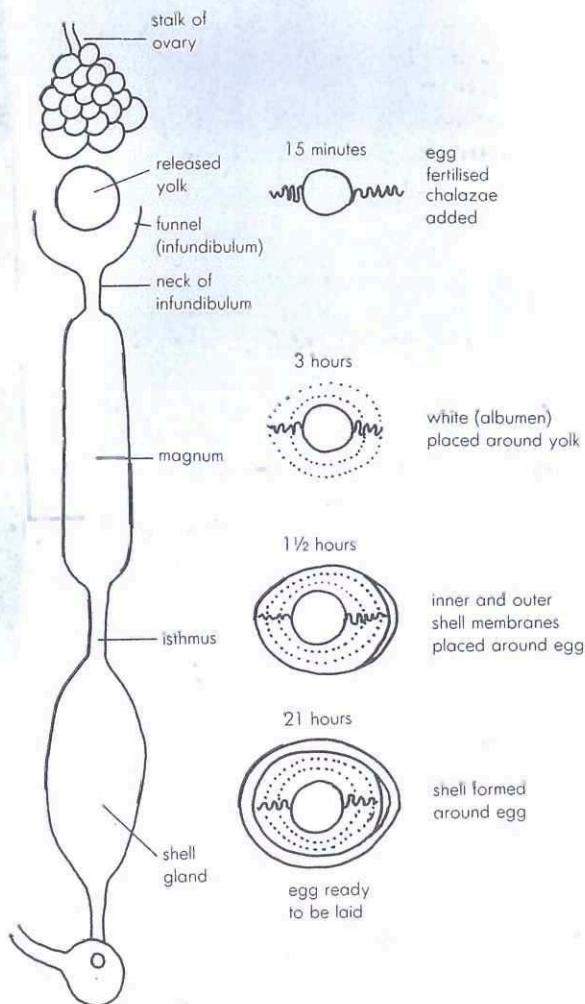
The length of days a hen lays an egg without a break is called the *clutch length*.

Let's examine egg production a little further and see if we can see why hens lay eggs in this pattern.



Making an egg

Examine the following diagram.



The process of forming the first egg in a laying cycle begins at sunrise. This process takes 25–26 hours. If sunrise is at 6.00 a.m., when would the first egg be laid?

Eggs generally are not laid after 2–3 p.m. in the afternoon.

What would be the clutch length of a hen with an egg development time of 25½ hours?

Let's work it out.

Day 1

6.00 a.m.: egg laid 7.30 a.m. the next day.

7.30 a.m.: egg laid 9.00 a.m. the next day.

9.00 a.m.: egg laid 10.30 a.m. the next day.

10.30 a.m.: egg laid 12 a.m. the next day.

12.00 a.m.: next egg laid at 1.30 p.m.

1.30 p.m.: next egg laid at 3.00 p.m.

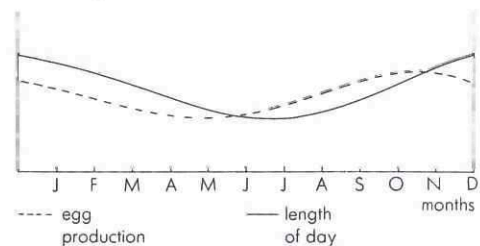
No eggs the next day because 4.30 p.m. is too late. The hen misses a day and starts the egg formation process again at sunrise.

What was the clutch length in days for this hen?

Activity 26

YEARLY EGG PRODUCTION

Examine the following graph.



1. Describe the shape of the graph.
2. At what month does egg production begin to rise? At what month does egg production begin to go down?

What important event occurs in these two months? (*Hint: Think about day length.*)

3. Write a sentence which describes egg production during the year.