

Common Meat Bird Problems

A Myers Poultry guide for troubleshooting common problems in broilers

OBSERVATION	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO CHECK	PRACTICAL NEXT STEP
Birds not growing fast enough	Insufficient protein, restricted feed access, overcrowding	Feed protein level, feeder availability, stocking density	Switch to higher-protein broiler feed, increase feed intake, reduce crowding
Birds growing unevenly	Competition at feeders or waterers	Number and placement of feeders and waterers	Add additional feeders and waterers and spread them evenly
Sudden deaths in fast-growing breeds	Excessively rapid growth, heat stress, overfeeding, or illness	Feeding schedule, temperature, activity level, and signs of illness	Implement scheduled feeding, improve ventilation, process birds earlier, monitor closely
Birds appear lethargic or inactive	Dehydration, heat stress, or illness	Water availability, temperature, signs of distress	Add waterers, provide shade and airflow, monitor closely
Leg problems or difficulty walking	Rapid weight gain or slippery footing	Growth rate, bedding condition	Use scheduled feeding, keep bedding dry, process birds on time
Birds piling or crowding	Temperature stress or uneven heat/light	Brooder temperature, heat source placement	Adjust heat source height and ensure even warmth
Birds eating but losing condition	Nutrient imbalance or poor feed quality	Feed freshness and formulation	Replace feed with fresh, properly formulated broiler feed
Increased mortality late in grow-out	Birds held past optimal processing window, overcrowding, or excessive protein	Age, size, growth efficiency, space, protein feed level	Move processing date earlier for future batches, increase space, reduce protein in feed

**The issues listed above are common management-related problems seen when raising meat birds. Not every situation will apply to every flock, and outcomes can vary by breed, environment, and management style.*