

## Covered veranda for laying hens

### Problem

Indoor housing of laying hens does not allow them to experience outdoor climate.

### Solution

A covered veranda may be a solution to provide hens with possibilities to experience outdoor climate.

### Benefits

A covered veranda provides hens with additional environmental enrichment and the possibility to experience outdoor climate, without being exposed to precipitation and predation.

### Practical recommendations

- A covered veranda can be opened for the hens at daytime. Permanent access is a possibility, provided the influence on the indoor climate (draft, wet litter) is sufficiently managed.
- The width of the covered veranda should be about 3 meters, making it possible to use machinery to remove litter and clean the area.
- Roofs may be an extended roof of the house. Also, light-permeable material can be used, making the covered veranda brighter.
- Provision of nipple drinkers and perches is advised. Also, roughage can be supplied on the covered veranda.
- Popholes should be large enough to prevent dominant hens from guarding the passing through of other birds.
- In addition: litter management is important (prevent wet litter on the veranda); side-/front walls should be constructed in a way that predators/pests cannot enter the veranda/the barn etc.

#### APPLICABILITY BOX

##### Theme

Covered veranda, animal welfare

##### Keywords

Covered veranda, laying hens, housing system

##### Context

Transition to and operating non-cage housing systems for laying hens

##### Required time

Daytime access or permanent

##### Period of impact

all lifecycle

##### Equipment

Roof, sidewalls, water lines, litter, perches

##### Best in

All cage-free housing systems for laying hens: barn, free range, and organic production

##### Target audience

Farmers, farm advisors



Figure 1: A traditional covered veranda with a solid roof and sidewalls of wire mesh. In this situation, the sidewalls can be rolled up to give hens access to the free-range area (Photo: WUR)



Figure 2: A covered veranda with a transparent roof, will result in a brighter environment (Photo: WUR).

## About this practice abstract and Best Practice Hens

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**Best Practice Hens:** To support egg production in non-cage systems and improve animal welfare, a consortium consisting of 7 partners will develop Best Practices for Non-cage Egg Production Systems as a European Commission, DG SANTE pilot project. These Best Practices will provide practical support to egg producers to encourage them to convert from cage to non-cage systems, including organic production.

Project website: [www.bestpracticehens.eu/](http://www.bestpracticehens.eu/)

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