Unit 7: Farm Animals Housing

7.1. Significance of Animal Housing

Purpose of Animal Housing

Good animal housing is essential for maximizing productivity and ensuring animal welfare. Proper housing:

1. **Protects Health**: Shields animals from adverse weather and potential diseases, leading to better performance and fewer health issues.
2. **Controls Environment**: Provides a controlled environment to manage factors like temperature and humidity, which affect animal behavior and productivity. For example, high temperatures can reduce feed intake and lower milk, meat, egg, and wool production.
3. **Prevents Disease and Parasites**: Well-designed housing helps prevent the buildup of pathogens and facilitates easy cleaning and disinfection, reducing disease and parasite problems.
4. **Improves Feed and Labor Efficiency**: Efficiently designed housing reduces feed wastage and labor costs by improving the layout and communication between feeding points and storage areas.
5. **Safeguards Against Predators**: Keeps animals safe from predators, which is crucial for their security.

Types of Animal Housing

1. **Conventional Barns**:
   - **Description**: Animals are kept in enclosed barns with roofs and walls, which protect them from harsh weather. The barns are well-ventilated with windows or ventilators.
   - **Examples**: Dairy cattle barns, deep litter poultry housing.
   - **Advantages**: Protects animals from severe weather; keeps barns clean and reduces disease prevalence.
2. **Loose Housing**:
   - **Description**: Animals have free movement within a building or pen. They can roam and access food and water at will.
   - **Advantages**: Increases animal comfort and welfare; suitable for tropical climates; more cost-effective and easier to expand.
3. **Free Range System**:
   - **Description**: Animals roam freely over large areas of pasture with access to water and shelters.
   - **Advantages**: Allows natural behavior and exercise; suited for animals not handled daily.

- o **Challenges**: Less control over environment; higher risk of predator attacks.
4. **Modern Farms**:
  - o **Description**: Includes advanced systems like battery cages for egg-laying chickens and hens-aviary systems.
  - o **Advantages**: High productivity with efficient feed use.
  - o **Challenges**: Higher investment costs; welfare concerns for animals in cages.

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Guidelines for Site Selection and Construction

1. **Site Selection**:
  - o **Topography**: Choose a well-drained, level area.
  - o **Water and Services**: Ensure access to clean water, veterinary services, and feed.
  - o **Accessibility**: Locate near good roads and power sources.
  - o **Distance from Residences**: Avoid locations near residential areas to minimize odor issues.
2. **Construction**:
  - o **Orientation**: East-West or North-South orientation affects sunlight and floor dryness.
  - o **Floor**: Should be smooth, non-slippery, and well-drained.
  - o **Walls**: Must protect from drafts and be durable.
  - o **Roof**: Should be high enough for ventilation, with overhangs to protect from sun and rain.
  - o **Ventilation**: Essential for air circulation and preventing dampness.

Unit Summary

- Proper housing is crucial for animal health, productivity, and welfare.
- Different housing systems include conventional barns, loose housing, free range, and modern farms, each with its benefits and challenges.
- Effective site selection and construction ensure comfort and efficiency in animal housing.