

Poultry: Summary of Work to Date



EFRC have completed a large amount of research within Sheepdrove Organic Farm (SOF) silvo-poultry production system, which has been instrumental in a number of design elements of the current system.

There is a tendency for organic poultry production to mimic conventional free-range systems without the beak trimming and with smaller flock sizes. Work on the SOF silvo-poultry system by EFRC has been directed at improving the system so the birds can be kept and managed so the animals, farmer and environment benefit from the production methods.

Changes made in the brooding stage of production include, adapting the brood sheds so that the young chick can have protected access to the outside world, so the can familiarise themselves with natural daylight luminous levels. In addition sounds of bird song, tractors and other livestock and farm noises are played to the chicks in the safe environment of the shed.



These changes help to acclimatise the chicks for the transition to the field and encourage the birds to range and take full advantage of the woodland environment.



Changes made to the field environment include the planting of avenues of trees, hedges and shrubs, as well as the addition of dust bathes and grain feeders to encourage them to roam from the houses.

