

Space-Ray Brooders Support Two Generations Of Family Success

1964 was a key year in poultry farming. The broiler industry was starting to take off and was regarded as presenting significant opportunities by pioneers and entrepreneurs alike. One man taking advantage of the new demand for poultry was John Smith, a farmer in Norfolk, England, who kept a modest number of chickens, and had maintained his business through the early post-war years. In the 1960s, as

the economy grew, people were able to travel more easily and take holidays in the country, and John was frequently asked to supply a chicken for family meals. When demand started to outstrip supply, joining the fledgling broiler industry offered John a solution.

Energy Efficient Brooding Since 1964

However, just as in any emerging industry, there were certain difficulties to overcome. Chicken houses in the 1960s were around 40' wide and 150' long, with 2" thick insulation and groove boarding on the outside. Efficient heating posed a problem: kerosene heaters were one option and electricity another, but supplies were very unreliable. The third alternative was propane gas.

Appliance manufacturer Space-Ray was quick to identify the demand for reliable heating to support the new broiler indus-



Space-Ray's propane powered brooders offer extended life-span and lower maintenance costs.

try, and recognised the many benefits that propane powered brooders offered. In addition to providing an independent, instantaneous form of fuel, propane is very clean burning so the life of the brooders would be significantly extended and maintenance costs kept to a minimum.

Space-Ray in the UK was established in 1964 and, following an intensive development programme, the well-known SRB1 (now the SRB40) canopy brooder was first introduced. Talks were also held with Calor Gas, already the major propane supplier in the agricultural marketplace in the UK.

Space-Ray Stands The Test of Time

John Smith was the very first user of Space-Ray brooders. Costing just £38 (approx. \$65)

each, his gas fired brooders were an instant success. Production methods, housing, ventilation, feeding, heating and drinkers have all been refined and improved over the years - for example, growing time for a 4.0 lb. bird was 68 days then, compared to around 35 days now. However, John remained committed to Space-Ray brooders, buying newer, updated models as he

needed them. The very first ones were given honourable retirement in 1987 - some 23 years after their introduction.

Space-Ray Moves On To The Next Generation

Sadly, John died in 1997 and now his flourishing enterprise is being successfully continued by son Richard and his wife Sue. Following in his father's footsteps, on rebuilding the original chicken house Richard specified Space-Ray brooders, and said: "Space-Ray brooders operating on Calor Gas propane gas have produced excellent results and suit our management style."

Space-Ray continues to develop equipment to meet the demands of the modern poultry-meat marketplace. Space-Ray

brooders are now exported and used worldwide. More recently the Space-Ray warm air heater, "The Advantage" was launched in the UK, promising the same potential to poultry growers now as the first brooders did 35 years ago.



John Smith replaced his 1964 Space-Ray brooders in 1987 some 23 years after their introduction.

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