

A POULTRY GROWER'S WIRELESS SOLUTION FOR MANAGING FLOCKS

Interview with Rhett Murphy | April 19, 2022



Raising poultry is in Rhett Murphy's blood. Growing up, he worked on his family poultry farm and began most of his mornings walking their chicken houses before heading into school.

After getting his poultry science degree from the University of Georgia, Rhett now works as a contract grower for Cobb-Vantress, LLC and manages 22,000 pullets and 3,500 roosters on his site in Homer, Georgia. As a third-generation poultry grower, Rhett was ready for a next-generation solution to monitor his poultry houses.

Going Wireless

Rhett originally monitored his chicken houses using Agri-Alert. With this system, Rhett says he had to be on-site in order to know when an alarm was triggered. Whenever there was an alarm, he was notified by an on-site siren, which required him to be at home in order to know when

there was a problem. If he did leave his site, Rhett had no way of knowing if anything happened when he was away, and no alarm history. Having real-time, remote visibility into the conditions of his chicken houses was impossible.

Rhett decided he would hire an electrician to have his Agri-Alert connected to a landline and internet so he could receive phone calls whenever an alarm was triggered. Paying to have his old alarm hooked up to a landline and ethernet, only to have it bogged down by a webwork of wiring, was far from ideal – and it came with a hefty price tag.

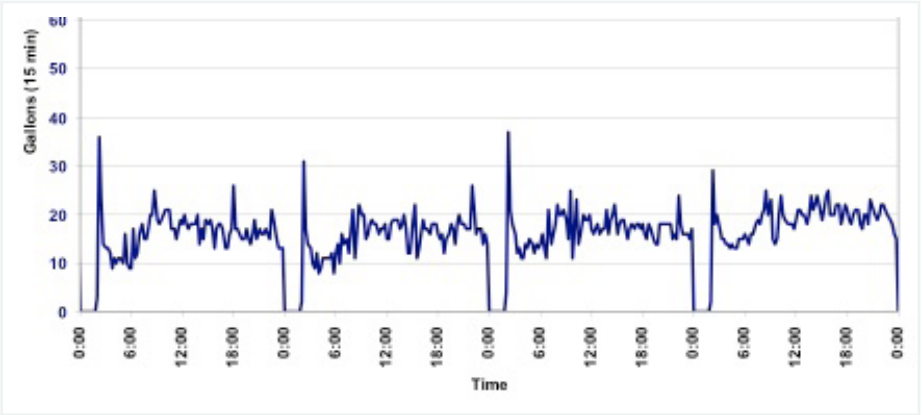
Before settling for a complicated and expensive alternative, Rhett came across BarnTalk and discovered that wiring up his old alarm system so he could receive alarm calls without having to be on-site was no longer his only option. After walking through his site layout with BarnTools' founder

Michael Hansen, Rhett decided to make the switch to the BarnTalk alarm system. "I loved how it's completely wireless," he said. "It was everything I was looking for and more."

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While having a wireless alarm system made for an easy installation that didn't require him to hire an electrician, it's also given Rhett the flexibility to receive and acknowledge alarms without having to be on site. "I'm not much of a homebody, and I didn't want to feel tied to the house just to look after my birds." Now, Rhett can view the conditions of his barn and know when alarms are triggered anytime, and from any location.

Lighting Influences Bird Water Consumption.



Source: University of Georgia Extension. (2015) Poultry Drinking Water Primer.

Forecasting Outcomes

Reliable connectivity is at the foundation of today's successful livestock operations. Using BarnTalk's built-in multi-carrier connectivity, Rhett now always has a backup connection and is no longer relying on a single lifeline to monitor his operation, making it a more reliable alarm. Rhett says having real-time visibility provided by a reliable connection has been a valuable asset for how he manages his flocks, and it was more than he originally expected to find in a new alarm system. "With BarnTalk it comes with a mobile app, and I can physically look at my house temps. I can physically look at my water consumption."

For Rhett and all poultry growers, water consumption is one of the most important factors determining a bird's production outcomes. Along with feed, a chicken's water intake is directly related to their body weight.

Water intake is also stimulated by light, which is something Rhett regulates in his barn using LED lighting and light traps. After installing his wireless water meter, Rhett is making use of trend graphs in his mobile app that visualize how his birds are consuming water. "I can just check in at any time of the day." If an irregularity with lighting or a health issue led to a change in his chickens' water consumption patterns, Rhett is able to identify fluctuations in their intake in real-time.

Rhett also invited his live production manager to be a guest on his system, providing him with visibility into real-time data on the health of his flocks, along with current chicken house conditions and alarms. By cross-comparing daily water consumption readings with body weight gain, Rhett says they're able to more immediately track how their birds are growing. They're also using real-time data to

guide their decision making and more accurately make projections about their operation.

Peace of Mind

Switching to BarnTalk, an alarm system that provided Rhett with the wireless, real-time monitoring capabilities he was looking for, was still less expensive than the cost of connecting his old, worn-out Agri-Alert.

Rhett says at the end of the day, having real-time, remote visibility into his poultry houses and no longer having to stay on his site to look after his birds has given him the reassurance he depends on as a grower. "Just having that peace of mind, that's what it's all about."

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