

# Egg Transfer

Aviagen Turkeys Ltd ®



## Definition

Transfer is the process by which eggs are moved from the incubator (also called the setter) into the hatcher.

## Objectives

1. To move the eggs from the incubator to the hatcher without affecting the hatchability.
2. The process of transfer can be combined with fertility testing the eggs, see [Management Advice Sheet - Fertility Testing](#).

## Procedure

- Eggs are normally transferred between day 24 and 25 of incubation. As far as possible, eggs should be transferred before the start of pipping.
- Turkey eggs no longer require turning after the 18<sup>th</sup> day of incubation and therefore in theory could be transferred after this date. However, it is not advisable to transfer eggs earlier than the normal 24 – 25 day period without thoroughly testing whether the hatcher is able to maintain the correct incubation environment around the eggs.
- While it is advisable to try and minimise the time the eggs are out of the machines during transfer, the task should not be rushed and risk damaging the eggs. Eggs can be kept at room temperature (20 - 25°C) on days 24 – 25 of incubation for a few hours without any adverse effect on hatch, although there may be a slight hatch delay if the time out of the machine is longer than 2 hours.
- Whatever system of egg transfer is chosen it must be done with care to prevent damage to the eggs. A high incidence of cracked eggs and/or haemorrhaging of the chorio-allantoic membrane in unhatched eggs can be an indication of rough handling during the transfer process.
- A wide range of equipment is available to assist with the transfer process from simple hand-operated devices to complex automated systems. All equipment used to transfer eggs should be properly maintained following the manufacturers recommendations.
- Where vacuum egg-lifters are used, particular care needs to be taken to ensure that eggs are not dropped and are picked up and released correctly.

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**Aviagen Turkeys Ltd.**

Chowley Five, Chowley Oak Business Park, Tattenhall, Cheshire CH3 9GA

**Tel:** +44 (0)1829 772020 **Fax:** +44 (0)1829 772059



**Web:** [www.aviagenturkeys.com](http://www.aviagenturkeys.com)

