

CHICK AUTOMATION: SCIENCE AIDS THE  
EGG.

Eggs. Millions of eggs. The humble producer, the fowl, is nowadays subject to mass production, and from the day the chicks are hatched, millions never know what freedom is. The natural life out of doors isn't their birthright in the 20th Century, for an egg-hungry world needs more eggs, better eggs, bigger eggs. The poultry farmer takes his notes, and away go the eggs.

At the hatchery on a large concern, science comes into the picture, here measuring the depth of the white. As they know what sort of hen laid the egg, the quest for more, better and bigger is helped by the data provided by the laboratory.

Weight is important, too.

Chicks by the million. The first thing to find out about them, their sex. Cook or hen? It takes an expert to spot the difference, when they're only an day old.

What can they be doing with a computer, costing £30,000. They're feeding it with the facts of life - poultry life; the vital statistics of eggs and chicks. So many facts, indeed, that no human brain could cope with them in the time. The computer uses codes, magnetic recording tapes and heaven knows what. And when the facts have been fed into it, it knows absolutely all there is to know about an egg, except how to lay it.

Who would have thought that behind the eggs we all take for granted there was all this science, all this industry? Some sceptics believe that the mass produced eggs and birds lack the flavour and nutritional value of those produced naturally. Scientists however believe they will improve both quality, quantity and size. Wonder if they'll ever be as big as this?