Anti-pick pastes. These can be used to curb cannibalism if just a few birds are affected. A bitter tasting, blood-colored preparation or pine tar daubed on the picked portion is effective. There are several commercial preparations for this purpose. If many birds are picked one of the following methods should be used.

Hen specks or blinders. These can be applied for the prevention of cannibalism in laying hens. They are attached to the nostrils and prevent the birds from seeing straight ahead but apparently do not affect eating or drinking. Specks should be applied to pullets before they start to lay. Several types are available and appear equally effective.

Debeaking. This is the most practical method to use with broilers. Debeaking is accomplished by cutting off the upper beak from ⅓ to ½ the distance between the tip and the nostrils. If less than ½ of the beak is cut off it will grow back within a few months. If ⅓ or more of the upper beak is cut off it will not grow back, but the lower beak usually grows longer. This makes it difficult for the birds to eat scratch from the litter or to drink from shallow waterers. In this case it is advisable to feed the scratch on top of the mash or in troughs on the floor. Chicks or poults can be debeaked at any age. Any sharp cutting tool can be used to debeak poultry. An electric debeaker with a heated blade to cauterize the tissue is commonly used.

Pick-guards. This device, as the speck, is attached to the nostril and extends over the end of the beak. It prevents the hen from picking forward, but does not hinder her eating. Neither specks or pick-guards are commonly used on turkeys.

Turkey-bits. These consist of a piece of wire placed between the upper and lower beak, held in place by squeezing the blunt ends into the nostrils. The wire prevents the beaks from closing tightly and injuring other turkeys, but apparently does not affect eating or drinking.

Dubbing. Large combs and wattles make attractive targets. Cutting off the combs and wattles of roosters at an early age will cut down cannibalism in breeding flocks. This will also prevent fertility losses due to frozen combs.

Once started, cannibalism becomes a habit. Every precaution should be taken to prevent it.
Cannibalism among chickens and turkeys—picking feathers, toes, vents, or other body parts—is a vice that develops in many flocks. Molested birds will be killed if cannibalism is not controlled. Even if few birds are actually killed there may be great economic losses, such as lowered growth efficiency and market grades, or reduced egg production.

The exact factors or combination of factors causing cannibalism are not known but certain feeding and management practices appear to be associated with the vice. Observations at Oregon State College reveal that an outbreak of cannibalism may occur at any age after the birds are 2 to 3 weeks old. It may happen even though the best known management practices are carried out, but the control methods discussed in this circular often are effective.

It is always a question whether or not a grower should debeak or use anti-pick equipment before cannibalism actually gets started in the flock. Certainly it is best to do so before pullets reach heavy production if previous experience shows cannibalism is likely to occur. Debeaking or applying specks or pick guards during lay may cause lower production.

Some producers are able to avoid cannibalism through good management with certain strains. If a severe outbreak occurs it is better to debeak or use an anti-pick device than to lose birds. The experienced grower who is familiar with his strain can usually determine the program he should follow under his system of management.

In Oregon State College reveal that an outbreak of cannibalism may occur at any age after the birds are 2 to 3 weeks old. It may happen even though the best known management practices are carried out, but the control methods discussed in this circular often are effective.

It is always a question whether or not a grower should debeak or use anti-pick equipment before cannibalism actually gets started in the flock. Certainly it is best to do so before pullets reach heavy production if previous experience shows cannibalism is likely to occur. Debeaking or applying specks or pick guards during lay may cause lower production.

Some producers are able to avoid cannibalism through good management with certain strains. If a severe outbreak occurs it is better to debeak or use an anti-pick device than to lose birds. The experienced grower who is familiar with his strain can usually determine the program he should follow under his system of management.

This circular was prepared by Lawrence Johnson and J. A. Harper, Poultry Husbandry Department, Oregon State College.
**Cures**

**Anti-pick pastes.** These can be used to curb cannibalism if just a few birds are affected. A bitter tasting, blood-colored preparation or pine tar daubed on the picked portion is effective. There are several commercial preparations for this purpose. If many birds are picked one of the following methods should be used.

**Debeaking.** This is the most practical method to use with broilers.Debeaking is accomplished by cutting off the upper beak from 1/2 to 1/3 the distance between the tip and the nostrils. If less than 1/2 of the beak is cut off it will grow back within a few months. If 1/2 or more of the upper beak is cut off it will not grow back, but the lower beak usually grows longer. This makes it difficult for the birds to eat scratch from the litter or to drink from shallow waterers. In this case it is advisable to feed the scratch on top of the mash or in troughs on the floor. Chicks or poults can be debeaked at any age. Any sharp cutting tool can be used to debeak poultry. An electric debeaker with a heated blade to cauterize the tissue is commonly used.

**Hen specks or blinders.** These can be applied for the prevention of cannibalism in laying hens. They are attached to the nostrils and prevent the birds from seeing straight ahead but apparently do not affect eating or drinking. Specks should be applied to pullets before they start to lay. Several types are available and appear equally effective.

**Pick-guards.** This device, as the speck, is attached to the nostril and extends over the end of the beak. It prevents the hen from picking forward, but does not hinder her eating. Neither specks or pick-guards are commonly used on turkeys.

**Turkey-bits.** These consist of a piece of wire placed between the upper and lower beak, held in place by squeezing the blunt ends into the nostrils. The wire prevents the beaks from closing tightly and injuring other turkeys, but apparently does not affect eating or drinking.

**Dubbing.** Large combs and wattles make attractive targets. Cutting off the combs and wattles of roosters at an early age will cut down cannibalism in breeding flocks. This will also prevent fertility losses due to frozen combs.

**Once started, cannibalism becomes a habit. Every precaution should be taken to prevent it.**