



Finally: a way to eradicate red mites

Heating your chicken barn to at least 45°C kills all red mites.

If poultry farmers heat their barns to at least 45°C before new laying hens arrive, all the red mites in the barn will be killed, a WUR study shows. Poultry farmers keep their laying hens for 80 to 90 weeks, after which they are replaced.

Red mites are a tricky pest to deal with.

They live in cracks and holes and crawl out

Red mite is a tricky pest to deal with

at night to suck the blood of the chickens as they roost. Wageningen researchers had already shown that pesticides have little effect in a barn with a lot of dust, and

cracks where the mites can hide.

But it now turns out that heating the barn between two groups of laying hens is a good option. Researcher Monique Mul and two Master's students placed nylon bags containing red mites or their eggs in four empty poultry barns in six different places, for example in cracks between two wooden planks, in the air vent or under a layer of manure. Then the barn was heated to 45°C or more with a pellet stove. This temperature was maintained for at least 48 hours. Afterwards, all the red mites and their eggs were dead.

Heating the barns of laying hens is an effective method for eradicating red mites, concludes Mul and her co-authors in the journal *Veterinary Parasitology*. AS