



TOOL
BOX
by LOHMANN

SAM STRATEGIC ACTIVE MANAGEMENT

AN ESSENTIAL
PROCESS IN
**CAGE FREE
MANAGEMENT**



ENG

You may have heard us talk recently about strategic active management or SAM for short, but have been left scratching your head over what it actually means.



In this article I hope to clear this up for you and highlight a few examples of what SAM actually is and how it should be implemented in your day-to-day management program.

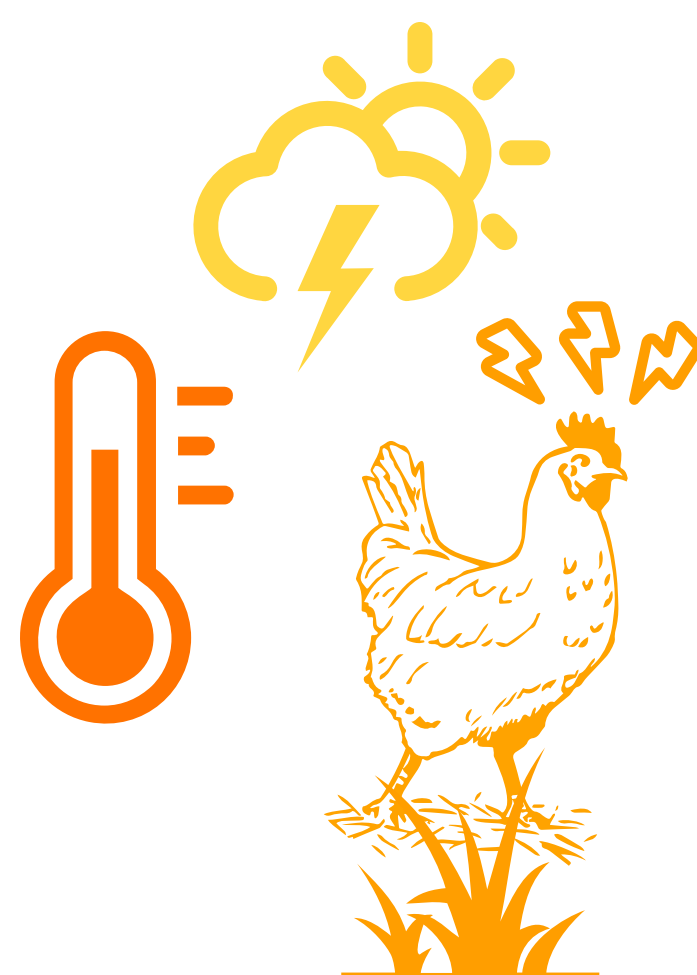
We all know that hens don't like change – and in an ideal world if we provide the right environment alongside high quality feed and water, then the hens will perform to their full genetic potential and we can more or less sit back and relax while they get on with the hard work.



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However, we also know that as we move from a **Cage to Cage Free or a Free Range/Bio/Organic production system**, not only does the influence of management increase exponentially, but also **the influence from external vectors**, (which are often outside our control) such as sudden weather/temperature changes, behavioural influences & metabolic changes through stress/health challenges will play a larger role in determining the efficacy of our flocks.

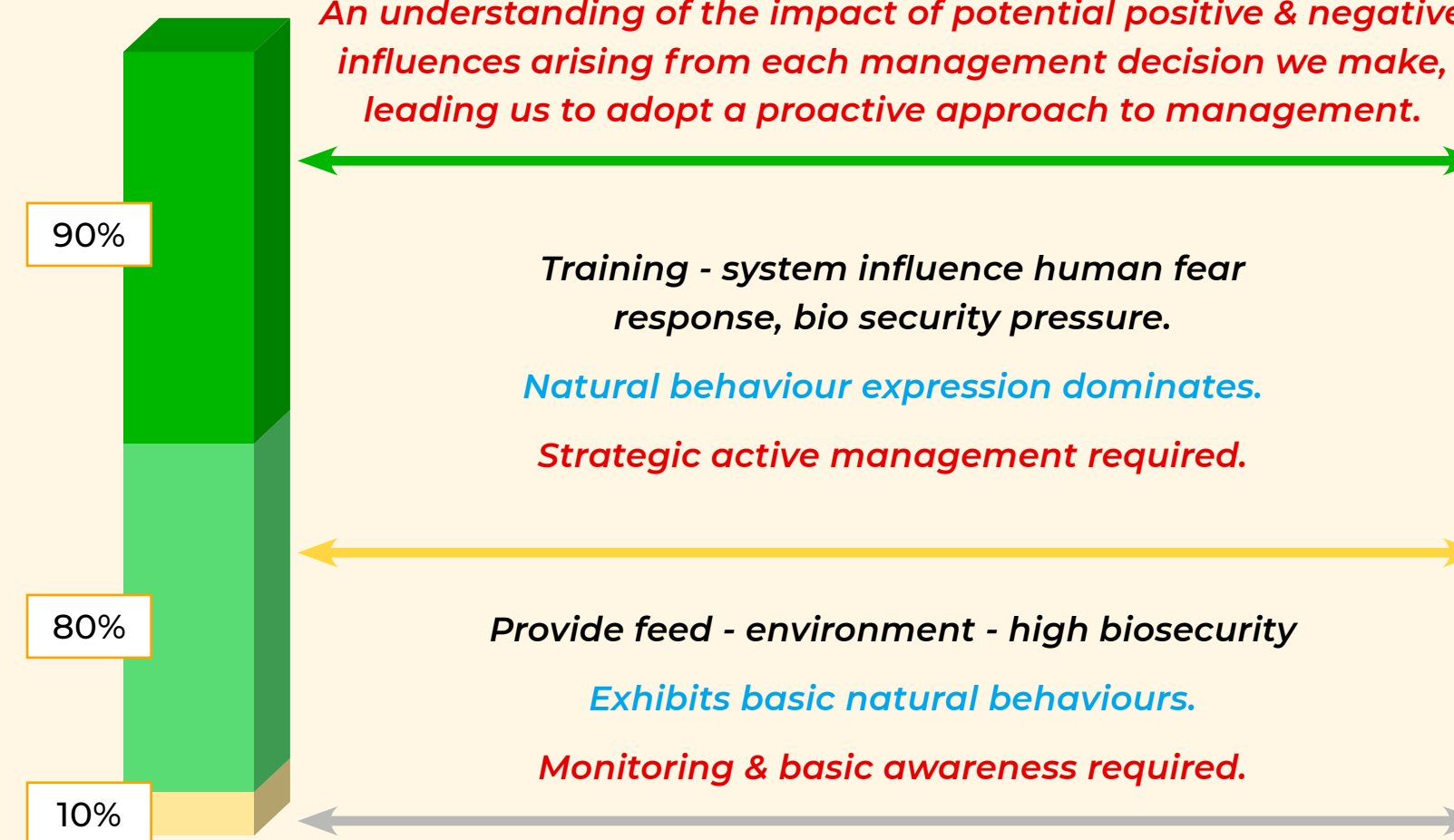


The influence of management

Reduced bio security - heightened overall risk factors.

Additional influence of natural expression.

An understanding of the impact of potential positive & negative influences arising from each management decision we make, leading us to adopt a proactive approach to management.



With this in mind we should always be prepared to adapt our day-to-day management practices in line with the flock status at **any given point in time**.

Therefore, we can put many Cage Free management practices under the umbrella of **SAM**:

- **Strategic** – Adapting management in line with expected additional behavioural/productive issues.
- **Active** – Adapting management to unexpected behavioural/productive issues.
- **Management** – Encompassing standard practices, nutrition & health issues.

So, let's dig a little deeper and look at some examples of SAM and when/how we would use it!



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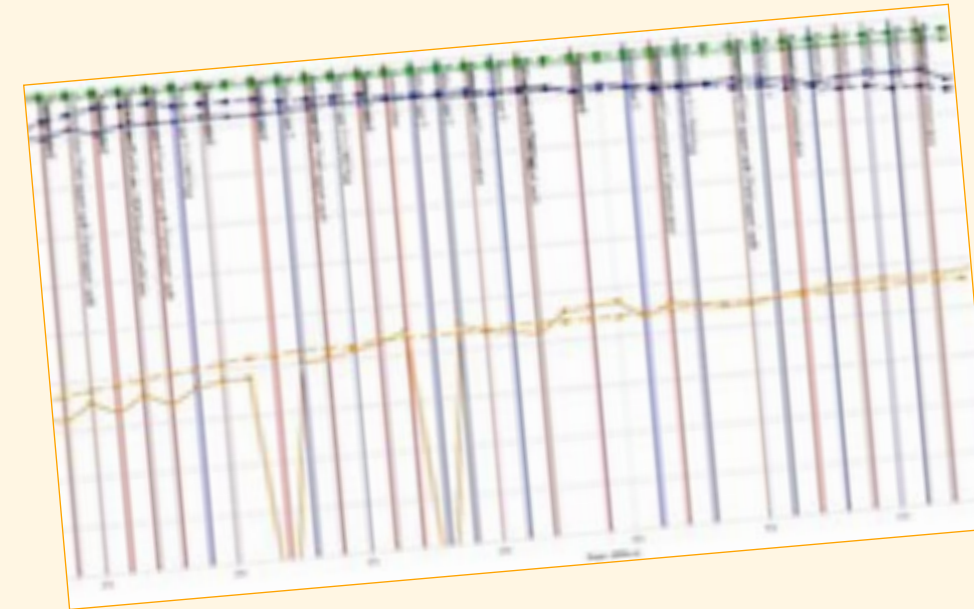
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To begin, we have to understand that **SAM is impossible without effective monitoring programs.**

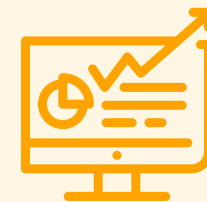
We often see these as rather basic or as a method of fulfilling legislative requirements, however they should be so much more than that.



Monitoring programs should be bespoke to your operation and should cover all general management practices plus any site specific issues which you may have experienced in previous flocks.



They are our eyes and ears of our flocks and are our starting gun to highlight when we need to intervene with **management, veterinary or nutritional methods** to help catch an issue **before** it becomes a costly negative influence.



Monitoring programs help to build up a complete picture of your flocks which can help not only in the current flock but also when performing **Flock Planning Reviews for your next flocks.**

Second, we have to understand **when and how to use SAM.**

A good example is when we look at feeding and bodyweights.



Imagine we are providing the best feed we can which meets all the nutritional recommendations advised by **LOHMANN BREEDERS.**



On face value, the hens are producing well and all environmental factors within our control seem to be sufficient, but we notice a dip in the uniformity of our hens during the weekly bodyweight recording.

What is the 1st step in our investigative process?



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Option 1 A standard course of action

What's our 1st course of action?

Change the feed? Why? Everything on paper looks good. Changing the feed could adversely affect the whole flock.

Alter the house environment? Why? Average temperatures are acceptable and making unnecessary changes could impact whole flock performance.

Offer the hens supplementary support? Why? This could be costly, unnecessary and could have potentially damaging side effects such as blocking the water lines.

Option 2 Use SAM

Strategic Active Management

Question:

Did I calculate correctly?
Who weighed the hens?
Where did they weigh them?
When did they weigh them?

Action:

1. Double check my figures & protocols
2. If correct then increase weighing frequency to compare and
3. Identify any developing trends

Result:

Weights & uniformity as expected - resume standard monitoring protocols

Remedial action:

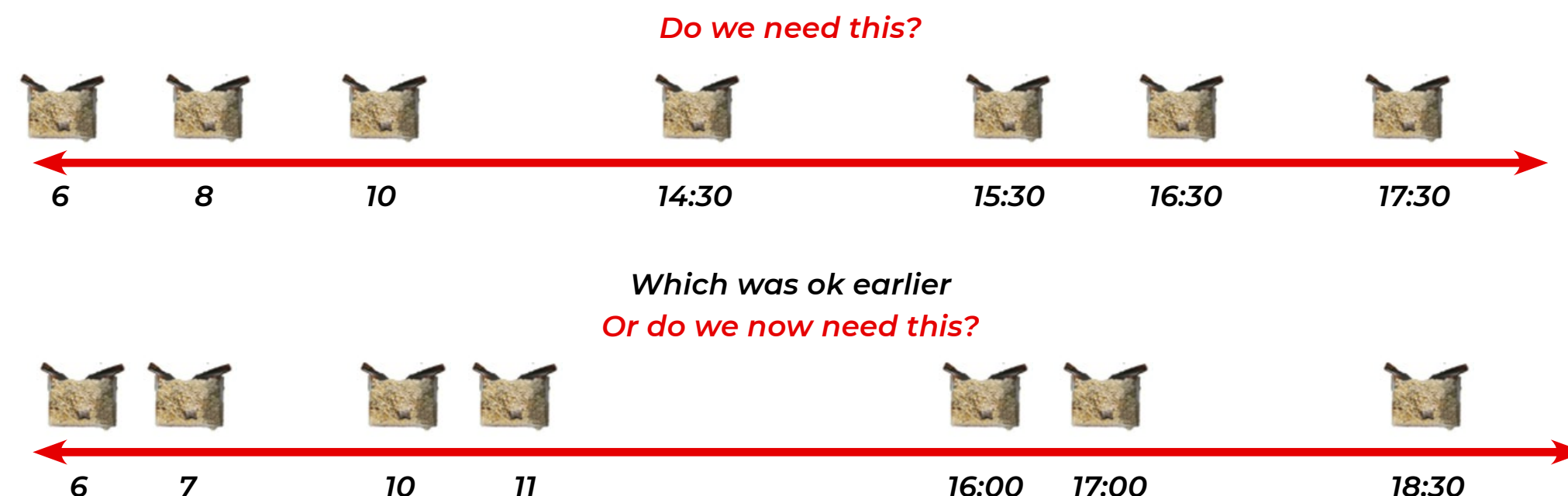
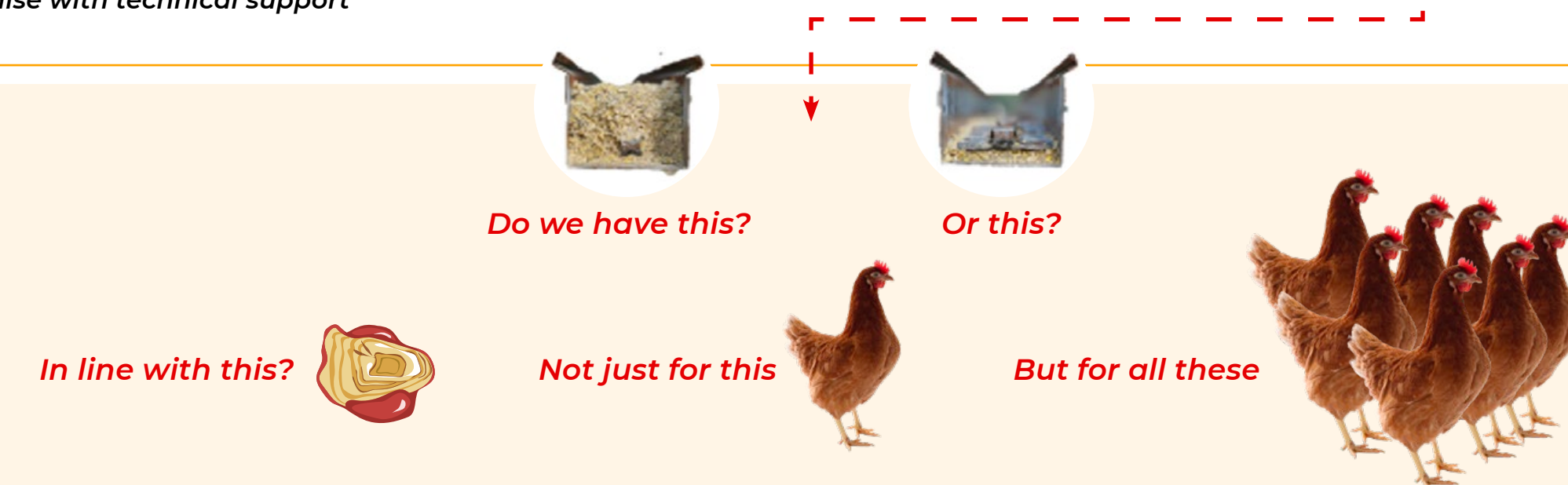
Back up check on all internal parameters
Take internal samples
Increase weight monitoring protocols
Liaise with technical support

Result:

Uniformity decreased further

Corrective action:

Review feed/Water intakes
Review feed delivery pattern
Crop check review on efficacy of feeding program

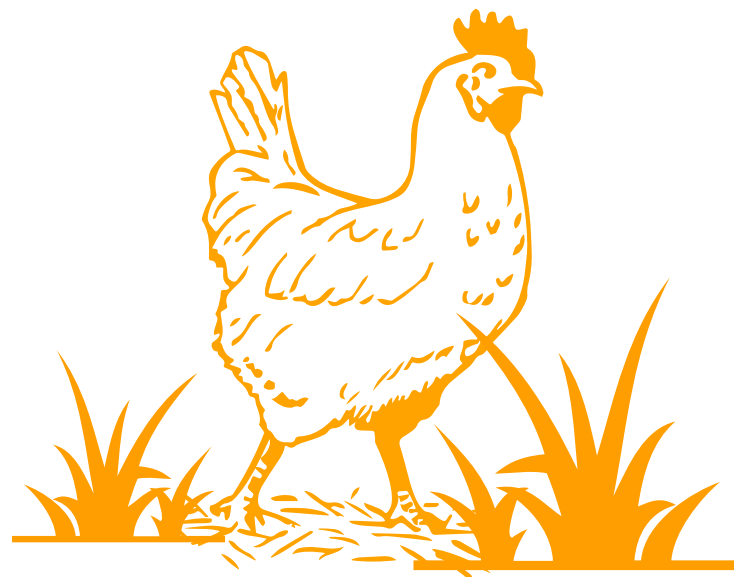




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This process of monitoring and adapting your practises is essential in Cage Free systems and is all part of the **Strategic Active Management** principle.



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Lighting

Light programs based on development – light intensity as a tool for behaviour– light dimming programs to control standard and adverse movement.

Nest Boxes

Opening and closing times adjusted in line with laying patterns and used to divert negative behavioural traits. Lighting to attract and also to detract.

Enrichment

Use should be strategic at all times based on the classification of enrichment. Can be used to divert and prevent undesired behaviours as outlined in the **RISE** strategy designed by LOHMANN BREEDERS.

Health strategies

Should be constantly adapting around current conditions, site history, external pressures.

Feeding

Not only to balance the flock under the one hen concept, but also to facilitate movement and can also be used as enrichment.



There
are many
practices that
come under
the banner
of SAM



Natural behaviours

No two flocks are the same and what worked for one, may not work for another, so observation and reaction is vital.

One example is recurring crowding, a natural behaviour that can soon turn into an undesired behaviour. Spotting behavioural traits of individual flocks can help prevent crowding/piling becoming smothering.

Consider using the LOHMANN BREEDER piling analysis form as a helpful aid.



As you can see, there are many areas where the use of SAM is essential. In Cage free systems we should always be adapting our management practices to what is happening in front of our eyes and not to what we expect to happen.

When we do that then the partnership between ourselves and our hens will ensure we have great results every flock.

