FAQ’s

How would you continue project development if given time?

If time allowed, there would be a few things we would love to be able to add to the system. First off, we had the idea to incorporate a ChickenCast system, which would be a live video feed of the inside of the coop so that the user could see the chickens and also check if there were any eggs. In addition, we would have liked to allow for some user input, such as how low the food needs to get for the warning lights to activate, or when the heat lamp should be on and when it should dim. Lastly, more time would have allowed for a longer period of time to test the system. Since the project window was so short, there was no way that we could even test if the system would work for a week straight, or two weeks, or any longer than that; we feel that it would be a good idea to test that the system can remain reliable over a longer period of time.

What lessons did you learn from the project?

Some of our key takeaways were to make sure to leave extra time for things to arrive. We had several issues with faulty parts, COVID delays, and then extreme weather delays. This was difficult to deal with and put us behind schedule. Another thing that we learned was that even though each of our individual blocks functioned perfectly well, integrating the system was not just plugging everything in. It took a lot of troubleshooting to get the system to work together.

What would you do differently if you could do it over?

One thing that we would do differently is probably the timeline of how we progressed through the project. We had two weeks for the first block and three for the second block, leaving only two for the final integration and testing. Instead of this, we would probably take a week off of each of the blocks and then use four weeks for integration. This would allow more time to troubleshoot, test, and perfect the system.
What was the biggest challenge, and how did you approach it?

The biggest challenge for our team was creating a waterproof design with connectors. Since we are paying for the project out of pocket, we were hesitant to buy expensive connectors. We found a way to use some plastic tubing to protect the wires and also make connectors to allow for easy transport of the system. This required some extra research and innovation, but it ended up working really well as a budget weatherproof design.

What is the most impressive thing about your project?

Our favorite part of what we created is the LCD display screen. It is the selling point of the system and we think it was a great addition. It displays the system status and the consumption history in an easy to read manner. This is a useful feature for chicken owners using the iCoop in order to easily see the system status and how the chickens are doing with food, water and environmental conditions.

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