**Supplemental material**

Supplemental Table 1. Relative expression of the *PRL* gene in tissues at different stages

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Tissue | pre-laying period | laying period | nesting period |
| pituitary | 1.318±0.4496A | 0.9272±0.5431A | 1.096±0.4546A |
| ovary | 0.1209±0.0305B | 0.1426±0.0189B | 0.2206±0.0167B |
| uterus | 0.3901±0.16B | 0.2877±0.0542B | 0.5817±0.2685B |

A,B,C Means in a column with no common superscript letter differ significantly (*p*<0.01).

**Supplemental Table 2.** Relative expression of the *PRLR* gene in tissues at different stages

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Tissue | pre-laying period | laying period | nesting period |
| pituitary | 1.8893±1.2576A | 1.9171±0.0082A | 1.7605±1.089A |
| ovary | 0.1784±0.1275A | 0.0834±0.02009A | 0.1769±0.0541A |
| uterus | 16.7393±8.5869B | 68.5141±10.3889B | 210.3092±11.757B |

A,B,C Means in a column with no common superscript letter differ significantly (*p*<0.01).