

HAPPY HENS

Healthy hens are this way because they have carers who apply good hygiene and care. Below I have put together a very general guide to careful hen keeping. Additional information can be supplied as well just contact us directly.

REQUIRED

- Hen house
- Run/pen/enclosure - as large and secure as possible
- Feeder(s)
- Drinker(s)
- Layers Mash
- Bedding
- Grit
- Disinfectant - Cruelty-free and biodegradable

RECOMMENDED ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT FOR YOUR HENNIES!

- Purple spray
- Wormers
- Vitamin tonic
- Apple cider vinegar
- Louse & Mite powder

Hens are generally low maintenance IF you keep on top of the foes such as mites, disinfecting, and worming. If these things are left until they are a issue, then you will have an expensive job to right it AND IT IS NOT FAIR ON THE HENS!

Hens naturally moult once to twice a year and this usually starts anywhere between February and April and sometimes August and November. Your hens will become shabby looking, if you look under their feathers you should notice feather spikes appearing, they should go off lay for this time. This can last 3-8 weeks, and can be made quicker by adding vitamins to their diet, there are many useful tonics, and supplements available on the market, most advertise the fact that they help moulting. Adding protein treats also help them, we use meal worms, suet balls for wild birds, and some people use oily fish. Please be aware that if they continue to lay whilst moulting their eggs may become soft or brittle, if they do lay those they may take to eating them. Try not to worry continue adding extra proteins and see it through.

OBVIOUSLY YOUR HENS WILL NEED EVERYDAY CARE

Your new hens will need letting out first thing in the morning, feeding and clean water, check they are all ok health wise first.

Eggs will need to be collected at some point, the sooner than later to stop any being trodden on or bad habits developing

Your hens will happily scrap and peck around until dusk when they will take themselves to bed or you can encourage them by feeding them at this time and calling out to them - they soon learn that food is available and will come running, Bless 'em!!

You will need to lock them up in hen house to keep them safe from predators and give them a quick once over to make sure they are ok.

CLEANING OUT

Your hens will need cleaning out regularly, this can mean a quick removal of soiled areas, followed by a monthly thorough clean (more often if you think they need it use your own judgement). As we keep quite a lot of hens we do a weekly deep clean. Your hens will need to be cleaned out more often winter than summer time, due to less light hours and mud!



HEN HOUSES

There are many types of hen houses for sale out there, and mostly its your own choice. The style and materials it's made from, the colour, the size. However the ones already made are usually pretty small so if they say they are for six hens you should only put four in etc

You need to consider whether you want wooden or another material used for hen houses like Chicubes or Eglu's.

RUNS/PENS/ENCLOSURES

Again this is completely your choice. It depends on your set up, other animals, garden and surrounding areas. Hen's are very good at free ranging, they tend not to go far and always come home to their hen houses at dusk (once settled). It is important that they are shut away at that time to protect them from predators mainly foxes.

Even if you decide your hens are to be free range they will need a run or pen to allow them outside whilst keeping them contained and safe especially when you first receive them.

Runs - Hen houses tend to come with runs, these are generally small and need regular moving to save the grass and stop the ground turning into barren wasteland!! Also by moving them and hsoing down the grass it helps remove the faeces etc and helps prevent spread of disease - waste should be removed everyday.

Pens - Can be made by you, will need to be dug into the ground to stop fox attempts, slabs or concrete around the outside is also very good at stopping predators digging in. You can then design a pen of your choice and usuallly make it much larger and cheaper than a shop/online bought one

Please contact us for more details

Enclosures - Fencing in an area of your garden or land with a gate, simply putting your hen house inside it. This keeps your hens in a designated area. Electric poultry nets are very good and you can move them around easily if needed.

FEEDERS AND DRINKERS

This again is a matter of choice, whats easier for you and your hens... There are many on the market to choice from - to support a charity British Hen Welfare Trust sell a number of products for hens check out their website first!

LAYERS MASH AND FEED

This is very important with farmed hens, Layer mash/meal is something they have been used to and we ask all who re-home to feed their hens it for at least the first 2

weeks. This will ensure your hens build up their strength, as they may not associate anything else with food. Farmed hens will live happily on it for the rest of their time, but if you wish them on a different feed start to mix it in gradually eventually removing the Layers meal. We recommend Allen and Page Ex-battery crumbs and then adding their pellets gradually after a couple of weeks.

GRIT

This is another thing that is quite important. Hen's have a crop, a place where the food goes to first and then moves down to stomach. Hen's can't chew so any food they eat isn't digested very easily. They need extra grit which can be bought from almost any pet shop, farm shop, or agricultural shop. When they eat the grit it goes into crop along with their food, the grit breaks down the food therefore ensuring the food is digested and weight is put on the hen well. Naturally chickens will peck at the ground they get natural grit from small stones and dirt, its not always enough.

You will see a bulge on the side of the hens neck after they have eaten and it looks like a huge swelling; it is just their food in the crop - you can feel it gently and then after a few hours or in the morning before you feed again, check to see if it has gone down - so you need to feel what it is like before the hens eat!

It's recommended that they have grit regularly added to or near food.

WORMERS

There are a few different wormers on the market, generally you can buy herbal wormers such as Verm X which many organic farmers use, which works well as a protector but there is a worm called Gape worm that it will not kill. Once you have seen your hens 'yawn' (which means they will probably have gape worm) as if trying to get food down that is stuck in their neck you will not forget it - you need to worm them immediately (so keep some FlubenVet in stock) if you see this and worm them altogether not just the one you have seen. Fluben-Vet is a very good poultry wormer available from veterinary surgeries and agricultural shops.

Hen's will need worming roughly a month or immediately if you see them 'yawning' or 'gaping' after you have re-homed, and then every 4-6 months.

PURPLE/VIOLET SPRAY

Purple spray is a anti-septic wound spray with a purple colouring and a fowl taste. It works really well with hens. Hens are known to peck at themselves and each other with any signs of blood. Quite often farmed hens are bald when they arrive and soon will grow back their new feathers. This re-growth can sometimes cause a little

irritation and the hens often pick at the new feather spikes causing a little blood, this will attract pecking from themselves and other chickens. With a few puffs of purple spray the wound will heal quickly, discourage pecking because of the fowl taste and also stop the attraction of flies.

VITAMIN TONIC

This is a tonic we use when the hens are straight out of the farm. It de-stresses them, gives them extra vitamins and encourages quick feather re-growth. There are many different formulas available. This tonic can be re-used when your hens moult, helps to get them over it quicker.

APPLE CIDER VINEGAR

A total Natural Organic, anti-bacterial, anti-coccidial anthelmintic and tonic beneficial effects for all livestock and poultry. It can also increase egg supply and improve feathers.

GARLIC

Many people who care for hens alternate weekly with apple cider vinegar and garlic powder just add a teaspoon with the feed every day or in the water and mix well - check to see all hens are drinking they tend to love both of these but incase you get a hen that doesn't then you need to put just plain water (never known a hen that doesn't like apple cider vinegar though!)

These are just a few of the basics, please contact us for a more indepth factsheet should you require more information - All those who re-home hens from us receive this information!

