



## CHICKEN BOARDING

We can take care of your hens whilst you are on holiday.  
Please see the website or telephone for details.

## FURTHER HELP

Please check the Information pages of the website for more help & advice. There are many great websites on the Links page, some of my favourites are:

- The Poultry Club of Great Britain - Clear advice & information - [www.poultryclub.org](http://www.poultryclub.org)
- Practical Poultry - Good forum section - [www.practicalpoultry.co.uk](http://www.practicalpoultry.co.uk)
- Poultry Garden - Excellent forum with friendly advice - [www.thepoultrygarden.com/phpbb/](http://www.thepoultrygarden.com/phpbb/)
- Urban Chickens Forum - Great forum - [www.urban-chickens.com](http://www.urban-chickens.com)

## GUARANTEE

The birds health is guaranteed for a week after sale. If you are concerned about any health problems please contact me within the first week. I do feel this is fair as I have no control over how the birds are fed and cared for after they leave me, as well as any stress or disease they might be exposed to in their new home.

I feel that by offering a weeks guarantee, you have plenty of time to observe the birds at home, and be satisfied they are healthy before any outside influences beyond my control could affect them.



# Newland Poultry



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## Getting started with Chickens.

Welcome to the addictive hobby of hen keeping. This leaflet covers very basic hen care to get you started. Please see the website for more detailed advice & information.

## SETTLING THE BIRDS

When you get home place the hens inside the hen house. Open the pophole & let them come out into the run in their own time. It will take the hens a few days to learn where home is. If they will be free ranging, you will need to keep them in a run for a few days to imprint where to return to each night. After this they can be let out and will return to the house at dusk to be shut in away from the fox.

Even if they have been living together, they will still have to sort out the new pecking order, and there will be some mild disputes for the first few days. Observe them to make sure no hens are being seriously bullied - if you ever see blood remove the hen immediately as the others will peck at blood incessantly (and to the death). If a hen is being bullied she may be cut off from the food & water by the other hens, so do watch for this & put food & water around the run for the timid hens. If the hens have plenty of space to keep out of each other's way & are not bored, all should be well after the initial settling in period.

If you are introducing the hens to your existing birds it is ideal to have them in view of each other but in separate runs for a week or two. If this is not possible & they have to go straight into the same house, I strongly recommend not putting them into the coop until it is dark & the original hens are roosting, let them out the next morning & carefully watch them.

## FEED

Layers pellets can be fed ad-lib, there is no need to limit the amount they eat. Layers pellets are their staple diet & provide all the nutrients needed. If possible, hang up your feeder a few inches off the ground, it will stop the birds scratching it out all over the floor and wasting it. Provide a pot of mixed grit & oyster shell, I hang mine on the wire to prevent it being spilt.

The hens love mixed corn, mealworms & most cooked peelings & scraps (check DEFRA website for current regulations regarding feeding household scraps). Limit their treats to a small amount later in the afternoon to ensure they will have eaten their daily ration of layers pellets.

They must also have access to clean water at all times - they drink more than you would expect - it takes a huge amount of water to produce an egg.

## LAYING

When the hens feel settled and are old enough, they will start laying usually at about 20-24 weeks, although it may be a bit earlier or later. Expect some very small or odd shaped eggs to start with, and even eggs without shells, but they will become larger and more uniform as the egg laying mechanism settles.

## HANDLING

The best way to have nice, friendly hens is let them come to you. Crouch down and throw treats for them, each day they will get a little closer until they may eat out of your hand, you can then try to stroke them. If you run after them they will associate you with being chased and will never come to you willingly. They will soon associate you with nice food and come running.

If you pick your hens up, support them underneath & gently hold down their wings to prevent them flapping. If they feel secure they will not struggle.

## GENERAL

Keep your hens entertained - bored hens start nasty habits like feather pecking. Make sure they have either access to fresh short grass or put a thick layer of woodchips or similar in the run for them to scratch in. Ensure they have a good area to dustbath in, if they are in a run create an artificial one. Hang up vegetables or even nettles for them to peck at. Please see the website for further ideas on keeping them busy.

## HEALTH

**Worming** - Your birds need worming 3 times a year with Flubenvet. This is really important - if birds are not wormed they will be unhealthy, not lay well and will consume more food to maintain their bodyweight.

**Lice** - Wild birds & vermin bring in lice and mites so they are impossible to avoid. Please check the skin, particularly around the birds fluffy vent feathers every few weeks. Lice hatch within hours and multiply incredibly fast so are best caught early. Northern Fowl Mite & body lice spend their whole life on the bird. If you find lice dust the hen all over with Louse Powder and repeat every few days. It is vital to get the powder down onto the skin, simply dusting the top of the feathers is totally ineffective.

**Red mite** live in the cracks and crevices of the housing & only come out at night to feed on the chickens. Check for them when the birds are roosting by shining a torch on the underside of the perches. You will see lots of tiny little red or grey dots moving. There are many treatments for red mite as it is a very common problem tending to be worse in the warmer months. Left untreated it will weaken & can eventually kill the hens.

The hybrid hens have been fully vaccinated . They will not require any further boosters.

If you are in any doubt about your hens health please consult your vet. They feel pain and fear just like any other pets, and I hope no-one would leave their dog or cat in distress, so please treat your chickens in the same way.

## ESSENTIALS CHECKLIST

- \* Clean, draught free but well ventilated house with adequate perching space.
- \* Layers Pellets, water, grit and oyster shell.
- \* Feeder & drinker, preferably hanging to prevent wastage.
- \* Bedding - shavings or similar.
- \* First Aid - Purple spray/wound spray, Louse Powder, Flubenvet wormer.