



HEN BOARDING

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

FURTHER HELP

Please check the Information pages of our website where I try to answer all the common questions you may have. There are also many recommended website on the Links page, some of my favourites are:

- The Poultry Club of Great Britain - Excellent advice & information - www.poultryclub.org
- Practical Poultry - Good forum section - www.practicalpoultry.co.uk
- Poultry Garden - Friendly forum with plenty of advice - www.thepoultrygarden.com/phpbb

GUARANTEE

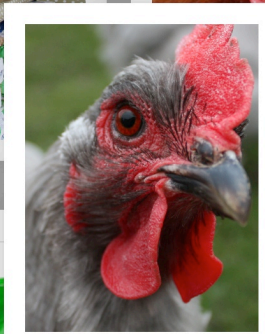
The birds health is guaranteed for a week after sale. If you are concerned about any health problems please contact me within the first week. I do feel this is fair as I have no control over how the birds are fed and cared for after they leave me, as well as any stress or disease they might be exposed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

All our hens come with a lifetime of free advice. If you cannot find the answer you need on our website, please feel free to contact me.



Newland Poultry



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Starting with Chickens

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

SETTLING THE BIRDS

When you get home place the hens inside the hen house. Open the pop-hole & 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 scuffles for the first few days - just observe them to make sure no hens are being seriously bullied. If you ever see blood remove the hen immediately as the other will peck at blood incessantly (and to the death). If a hen is being subtly bullied she may be cut off from the food and water by the other hens, so do watch for this as she will gradually get weaker. If the hens have plenty of space to keep out of each other's way and 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 and the original hens are roosting, then carefully observe them the next morning and see how they get on.

FEED

Layers rations in either pellet or mash form can be fed ad-lib, there is no need to limit the amount they eat. Layers rations are their staple diet and provide all the nutrients needed. If possible, hang up your feeder a few inches off the ground inside the house, it will stop the birds scratching it out all over the floor and the local wild bird population stealing it! Provide a pot of mixed grit & oyster shell, I hang mine up in a pot to prevent it being wasted.

The hens love mixed corn, mealworms, and scraps (but please check DEFRA website for current regulations regarding feeding household scraps). Limit their treats to a small amount later in the afternoon, that way you know they will have eaten their daily ration of layers ration.

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 they are old enough, they will start laying. Expect them to lay at about 20-25 weeks, although it may be a bit earlier or later. You can 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 they settle.

HANDLING

Always let the hens come to you when taming them. Crouch down and throw feed 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. Let them come to you in their own time, but be aware they are all individuals & some hens may never enjoy being handled. If you pick your hens up, support them underneath and gently hold down their wings to prevent them flapping. If they feel secure they will not struggle.

HEALTH

If you are concerned about your hens health, please download our 'Hen Health Assessment' sheet from the Information pages of our website.

Worming - Your birds need worming 3 times a year with Flubenvet.

Lice - Wild birds and 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 spread incredibly fast so are best caught early. Northern Fowl Mite and 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 hen will not work.

Red Mite - Red mite live their whole lives in the cracks and crevices of the housing and 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 common problem tending to be worse in the warmer months.

Moulting - Pure breed hens will moult annually (change their feathers). Hybrid hens have a partial moult. If you notice lots of feathers in the coop, this is quite normal - she will stop laying during this period, but will start again when she has re-feathered.

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

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

CHICKEN ESSENTIALS CHECKLIST

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