

CARE OF READY TO LAY PULLETS

The pullets you have purchased have been raised under strict supervision. Our pullets have received the necessary vaccinations for most poultry diseases and have had their beaks trimmed to prevent feed waste and mortality from pecking. Also, they have been tested for **Avian Influenza** and **Salmonella enteritidis** at 14 weeks. Our floor raised birds will perform well in free-range or confined housing (minimum 1.5-2 sq. ft. per bird). **Please note:** If you intend to pasture your birds, confining them inside for a period of 14-21 days after arrival is recommended. This will allow them to become familiar with the location of feeders, waterers and nesting areas. Smooth transition from the growing house to laying house is critical to ensure health and productivity.

Proper management is the key to avoiding production “F. L. A. W.s”

FEED: At 17 weeks, these pullets are ready to go and should be fed an 18% layer ration. Meeting this requirement results in maximizing egg numbers and size. We do **NOT** recommend supplementing their feed ration with any other grain or caloric intake; this will disrupt the nutritional balance of the properly formulated ration. Anything short of their nutritional requirement can have a devastating impact on egg production. During peak production, layers should also have oyster shell available to supplement calcium requirements. **SPACE FOR FEEDERS:** Hanging feeders with a diameter of approx. 12” will accommodate up to 25 birds.

LIGHT STIMULATION: This is one of the most important factors in maximizing egg numbers and size. If day length is allowed to decrease when pullets are beginning to lay or in lay, these birds will drop in production or stop laying completely. At 16 weeks these pullets are getting 12 hours of day length per day. (Example: 7:00 am to 7:00 pm)

We recommend using a timer to increase day length following this schedule:

17 weeks - 13 hours,
18 weeks - 14 hours,
19 weeks - 15 hours,
20 weeks - 15 1/2 hours,
21 weeks - 16 hours,
22 weeks - 16 1/4 hours,
23 weeks - 16 1/2 hours
24 weeks - 16 3/4 hours,
25 weeks - 17 hours.

These increases must be given every 7 days.

Remember that natural day length changes both morning and evening, so its best to add AM and PM lights. Once you reach 17 hours of light per day, maintain this lighting program year around. Turning the lights on at 4:30 am and off at 9:30 pm is ideal and will cover any outside daylight influence. Lights in your laying house that are too bright could lead to pecking and flightiness; one 60watt bulb for up to 12’ x 12’ area is adequate.

REMEMBER: NEVER LET DAY LENGTH DECREASE ON LAYERS.

AIR: Fresh air movement is important to ensure healthy birds. It will prevent eye damage or blindness from ammonia burn during the winter months. Extreme high, low, or variable temperatures will adversely affect egg production and overall health. The ideal temperature is 70°. During the winter months, keep the temperature above 50°.

WATER TRANSITION: Most started pullets are raised with nipple drinkers. Because of this, these birds are not used to fountain style drinkers. If using fountain type waterers, make sure to have the drinkers at head height. This will make it easier for the birds to see the water. Warm water or feed build-up in the watering system will aid in bacteria growth. **SPACE FOR WATERERS:** A round waterer with a diameter of approx. 15” will accommodate up to 75 birds. If using a trough waterer, allow 1” of space per bird. If using nipple drinkers, it will allow 10-14 birds per nipple.

REMEMBER: if you won’t drink it, don’t give it to your layers

Helpful hints:

1. Ideal body weight for the first light stimulation is 2.90-3.00 lbs.
2. Putting in extra bright lights during the waterer transition from pullet to layer house will help the birds find their new watering system.
3. Feed pans approximately 6”-8” off the floor will reduce feed wastage.
4. If eggs start to get too large, reduce nutrient density
 - a. 18-30 weeks, 18% layer ration
 - b. 30-40 weeks, 17% layer ration
 - c. 40-50 weeks, 16% layer ration

BENEDICT’S HOME AND GARDEN

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If you have any questions or concerns,
Please do not hesitate to call us at

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