

Management Timetable

as recommended by the 4-H Extension

Task To Be Performed	Age of Chicks
1. Order chicks well in advance.	--
2. Clean and disinfect brooder house.	
3. Clean and disinfect brooder and equipment.	
4. Provide 1/2 sq. ft. floor space per chick.	
5. Check house for drafts.	
6. Clean light bulb.	
7. Cover floor with 3 inches of litter	
8. Place brooder guard around brooder.	
9. Start brooder and adjust temperature at least two days before chicks arrive.	
10. On day chicks arrive, fill waterers. Provide six one quart size waterer for each 100 chicks.	First day
11. When chicks arrive, place under brooder immediately and make sure they find water.	First day
12. Three to 5 hours after chicks have had water,	First day
13. Watch and keep uniform temperature of 90-95°F.	1-7 days
14. Allow one inch of feeder space per chick.	1-7 days
15. Stir litter often to prevent caking.	Regularly
16. Reduce temperature of brooder approximately five degrees each week until no artificial heat is needed	Weekly

Task To Be Performed	Age of Chicks
17. Remove brooder guard.	7-10 days
18. Vaccinate chicks for Newcastle and bronchitis.*	10 days
19. Clean and disinfect waterers often.	Regularly

20. Provide two 2 gallon waterers per 100 chicks	2-4 weeks
21. Increase feeder space to 2 linear inches per bird.	2-6 weeks
22. Provide two 5 gallon waterers per 100 birds.	4 weeks
23. Vaccinate flock for Newcastle and Bronchitis.*	6 weeks
24. Increase feeder space to 3 linear inches per pullet.	6-20 weeks
25. Feed a grower ration.	6-20 weeks
26. Vaccinate flock for fowl pox.*	12 weeks
27. Revaccinate for Newcastle and bronchitis.*	16 weeks
28. Feed a laying ration.	Onset of laying
29. Check ventilation.	Regularly
30. Provide 14 hours of light.	Onset of Laying
31. Check time clocks.	Regularly
32. Collect eggs twice a day.	Throughout laying period

*Vaccination program is optional

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This is the speech I gave for the 4-H competition. I only had 10 minutes to talk and show the displays. That's longer than you would think! But that doesn't leave room for too much information. I'll be adding more sections later.

How to Have Eggsceptional Laying Hens

The three key factors in getting the most from your laying hens are:

- Environment
- Food
- Water

Environment:

To have a proper environment for your chickens they need the following:

Light

0 to 24 week old chickens should have 12 hours of light a day.

Too much light and they will grow too quickly and not produce as many eggs. Too little light and they will not grow properly (small breast size, chicken scrawny).

24 week old chicks and up should have up to 14 hours of light a day.

The best source of light is sun light. Chickens do best when they are allowed to wander around in the sunlight searching for bugs and other treats. You should also have a window in the coop for light and ventilation. When the winter comes, you may need to use lightbulbs as a light source.

Temperature

Chickens should be kept at a temperature between 45 degrees F and 85 degrees F. In the summer, open windows or even use a fan to keep them cooler. In the winter, you may use a heat lamp. The heat lamp should be at least two to three feet from any litter or hay as it may catch them on fire.

Young chicks are unable to maintain their body temperature without another heat source. Use a brooder to protect the chicks from the cold. The temperatures varies with the age of the chicks, and are as follows:

Temperature Age of Chicks

95 F 1 day to 1 week

90 F 1 week to 2 weeks

85 F 2 weeks to 3 weeks

80 F 3 weeks to 4 weeks

75 F 4 weeks to 5 weeks

70 F 5 weeks to 6 weeks

At six weeks of age, the birds should be wellfeathered and supplemental heat is no longer needed.

Clean Area

Dirty and wet litter can cause diseases. Sweep out the manure as soon as it builds up. Sweep out the hen house and scrub with a commercial cleaner especially for chicken coops at least twice a year. It is best to do this before and after the winter when the smell won't be so bad. I sweep the manure and straw out of our hen house every weekend and give the chickens fresh bedding of straw and some pine chips.

Nest Boxes

Production hens need nest boxes to lay their eggs in. You should have one nest box for every four chickens, but it is best to have one nest box for each chicken to prevent dirty and broken eggs. You should also collect the eggs first thing in the morning and again in the late afternoon for the same reason. Keep the nest boxes clean to prevent diseases.

Food

The cost of food should equal **2 thirds the cost of a dozen eggs**. To make a profit, the food should be nutritional and not wasted.

The feed should contain:

Table 1. Minimum protein, calcium and phosphorus requirements for broilers, pullets and laying hens.

	% Protein	% Calcium	% Phosphorus
Broilers			
Starter	23	0.9	0.5
Finisher	20	0.8	0.5
Pullets			
Starter	20	0.9	0.5
Grower	17	0.8	0.5
Laying Hens			
Layer	16-18	3.0	0.5

You can use many types of feeders to hold the food.

Automatic feeder

limits wasted food because chickens can't scratch it out.

Trough

easy to make and less expensive

***Make sure you give 5 to 6 inches of space for each chicken so they won't fight over the food.

You may also need to give the chickens oyster shells for extra calcium and grit to help digestion. For these you may use a

Hopper

Water, Water, Water

One of the most important thing to a chicken is water. For a chicken, **24 hours** without water equals **24 days** until they begin producing eggs every day again. You may use several types of waterers.

Automatic waterer

limits the chance of the chickens going without water

Plastic Waterer

a bit less expensive, easy to use

Trough

easy to build and cheaper

******Make sure you give 1 inch of water space for each chicken.**

SUMMARY

As you now know, to make a profit from Laying Hens they need to have 4 key items:

A GOOD ENVIRONMENT

PROPER FOOD

PLENTY OF WATER

My SOURCE:

4-H Laying Hens Project Book, Countryside Magazine and my own experiences.

For more information **CONTACT:**

Local Chicken Farmers or your County Extension Agent or your 4-H Leader.

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Exhibiting Poultry

Excerpts from the "4-H Poultry Production Projects - Exhibiting Poultry for Pleasure" manual

Selecting Birds for the Pullet Show

During the growing phase, look for outstanding individuals in the flock. Use plastic leg bands to identify the best birds so that when show time arrives you will know which birds to catch.

The most popular kinds of pullets used in the 4H Pullet Show and Sale Project are Black SexLinks, Red SexLinks, and Rhode Island Reds.

The Black SexLink and the Red SexLink are not pure breeds. Most county fairs, however, have classes in the 4H division available for the sexlinks.

These birds are intended to be used primarily as replacement stock for layers. The emphasis for selection, therefore, is based mainly on body conformation and sexual maturity, with some consideration given to the head, feathering, feet, and toes. You should look for certain characteristics and qualities when selecting birds for show and sale.

The Head

The head should be broad and somewhat flat on top rather than round, wide between the eyes, and moderately long. The face should be clean cut, smooth, and wrinkle-free. The skin should be fine grained and soft in texture, the comb substantial in size and rich in color. The eyes should be large and bright with the irises a rich reddish bay color, and the pupils distinctly round.

Sexual Maturity

The comb, wattles, and earlobes should be well developed.

Body Conformation

The body should be broad, deep, and well developed. This is important for adequate intestinal development, which is needed for quick digestion and absorption of food necessary for good egg production. Body depth can be determined by placing your thumb on the hip bone and spanning with your

hand and fingers the sides of the body to the keel bone in front and in back of the legs.

To measure heart girth, turn the bird on her side, back toward you, with your thumb on the back near the juncture of the wings and body and your middle finger on the front of the keel. The heart girth should be deep, allowing plenty of room for the heart and lungs.

Feathering

Pullets should be fully feathered with the plumage in good condition.

Feet and Toes

The pullet should be well balanced on her legs. The feet and toes should be normal.

Fancy Breeds and Varieties of Poultry

There are about 175 varieties of chickens grouped into 12 classes and nearly 60 breeds. Class is based on place of origin such as the American Class, the Asiatic Class, the English Class, and the Mediterranean Class.

Breed sorts birds within a class by body shape and size, such as Leghorn breed in the Mediterranean Class, and the Rhode Island Red breed in the American Class.

Variety is a further breakdown of breed and is based on feather color, feather pattern, and/or comb type. Thus the Plymouth Rock may be white, barred, or one of many other colors.

In addition to chickens of normal sizes, there are miniatures of many breeds. They are usually one-fourth to one-fifth the size of regular chickens, and are called bantams.

If you get a chance, visit a poultry show. It can be lots of fun. You will see many breeds and varieties of poultry. People who raise and exhibit poultry are known as poultry fanciers. They enjoy their hobby and take great pride in raising chickens to compete in poultry shows.

If you would like to raise and show the fancier breeds of chicken, ask your county Extension agent for a copy of "Growing HobbyType Chickens."

Preparing Birds for Show

The pullets should be clean and free from lice and mites. This improves their appearance and makes a good impression on the judge.

Materials for Washing Birds

Three washtubs
Sponge

Mild soapflakes
Soft toothbrush

Malathion, 50 percent wettable powder

Towels

Place three washtubs containing clean water on a bench at a convenient height. Use one tub for washing and two for rinsing. Put warm water (about 95F) and some soap flakes in the first tub. Also, add 1 1/4 ounces of 50 percent Malathion wettable powder per gallon of water. The malathion removes any external parasites. Do not use detergent compounds, because they are harsh and will cause brittle feathers.

Rest the bird on the palm of one hand, holding the wing tip with the thumb and fourth finger, and immerse in the soapy water. Do not put the bird's head under water. Lather the feathers well, using a sponge so soap and water penetrate to the skin. Always rub with the grain of the feathers to prevent breakage.

If the shanks and feet are dirty, brush them with a soft toothbrush.

When the bird is clean, transfer it to the second tub. The water temperature should be around 85F. Soak the bird for two minutes, and then draw it through the water three or four times against the grain of the feathers to work out as much soap as possible. The third tub is also for rinsing. The water temperature should be about 75F to accustom the birds to the cooler air temperature.

When the bird has been washed, towel dry, and slip it into a grooming sleeve.

A grooming sleeve is a canvas cone open at both ends with 2 1/2 inch opening at the small end and a nine inch opening at the large end. Slip the bird's head through the large opening and out the small end. Fold over the large end. With the bird in the sleeve, you can clean the head and feet.

Put the bird into a clean coop, in a warm area with plenty of clean straw or wood shavings and let it dry. Wash birds 48 hours before showing.

Reduce drying time by using a hand held hair blow dryer.

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