



DUNCAN'S POULTRY

The backyard and wholesale specialist

Taking care of your chickens

Knowing how to take care of your chickens will not only keep them healthy and prolong their life, but it will also make sure they are producing good quality eggs often.

Your chickens will arrive fully vaccinated against a range of diseases including Infectious Bronchitis at day old, I.L.T at 4 weeks old, Newcastle Disease (live vaccine at 4 weeks old, killed vaccine at 8 weeks old), Salmonella, Mareks Disease and Fowl Pox.

When you can expect the first egg

In spring/summer: Approximately 20-22 weeks, In autumn/winter: Approximately 20-24 weeks

What to feed your chickens

Up to 18 weeks old – Pullet Grower

Over 18 weeks old – Layer Pellets (15% - 17% protein)

We strongly advise that you feed pullets less than 18 weeks of age ONLY Pullet Grower as other diets such as laying pellet, grain, oats, bran, pollard or kitchen scraps don't provide adequate nutrition for a young growing pullet.

To maximise egg production, laying hens need constant access to a good quality layer pellet. Kitchen scraps and foraging in the yard/gardens should only make up a very small percentage of their daily diet. Too many 'treats' will reduce egg laying as they do not have enough protein, energy and calcium.

How to care for your birds

We strongly recommend that you run your flock of young pullets away from older birds until they are fully mature. This will help them avoid diseases and illnesses which your older birds may already be immune to.

Treat your chickens every 2-3 months with Dewormer (e.g. Piperzine or Pig and Poultry Wormer) and Flea Powder (e.g. Pestine)

Watch closely for:

- Coccidiosis – pale combs, loss of condition, blood in droppings, drooping wings. Treat with Coccidiostat.
- Respiratory problems – typical symptoms such as a runny nose, coughing, watery eyes or swollen face are signs of C.R.D. and should be treated with a broad-spectrum antibiotic.

Watch out for Fowl ticks

Fowl tick is a small variety of tick that is most commonly found in warmer climates (e.g. Western and Northern NSW, Victoria and wide areas along the Murray River) though they've been spreading to other areas.

Signs that your birds have ticks include:

- fewer eggs,
- white diarrhoea and weight loss,
- toxemia and anemia
- paralysis (starting in the leg, wing and then respiratory system, killing birds after about 24 hours of exposure to the tick virus).

Tick prevention

Heavily dust birds with Pestine powder as you place them in the pen to help prevent tick bites. Spray the area with an insecticide and regularly monitor your birds and their pen to prevent infestations.