Helpful websites:

Poultry and Gamebird Production Guides
http://extension.psu.edu/business/ag-alternatives/livestock/poultry-and-game-birds

For Production and Health Information
http://www.extension.umn.edu/agriculture/poultry/

Poultry Industry Associations
http://www.poultryu.umn.edu/associations-organizations/poultry-industry-associations

Poultry Feeds:
http://www.famofeeds.com/index.cfm?show=17&mid=6

Over a Century of Innovation & Trust

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Poultry Management

Types of Poultry • General Poultry Care •

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Bedding Options • Frequent Asked Questions •

Helpful Websites

Types of Poultry:

Chickens, turkeys, duck, geese, and gamebirds are classified as poultry but they are not all used for the same purpose.

Laying Breeds – These birds are known for their capacity to lay eggs. A healthy, well-cared for hen can lay eggs for several years beginning at 16 – 20 weeks of age. In her first laying year, the average hen can produce over 20 dozen eggs! At around 14 months, laying hens will molt, meaning that they will lose their old feathers and grow new ones. During this time no eggs will be produced. Once the hen finishes molting, she will resume laying eggs; however, there will be fewer, but larger eggs produced. At 20 weeks, white egg layers typically weigh 3 lbs while brown egg layers (which produce fewer eggs) weigh in around 4 lbs. Typical laying breeds would be White Leghorn, Red Sex Link, and Black Sex Link.

Meat Breeds – Meat-producing chickens can be distinguished from laying breeds by their larger frame. These types are extremely efficient at converting feed into meat (about 1 lb of bodyweight per 2 lb of feed). Meat birds grow very quickly and will weigh in at 5+ lbs at 8 weeks of age. Broilers and fryers are butchered at 3.5 – 5 lbs and roasters at 6 – 8 lb. Cornish breeds are the most popular.

Dual-Purpose – There are some breeds of chickens that fall into both categories and are often the chosen breeds for backyard chickens. They tend to be hardier breeds and are more self-reliant. They typically lay large brown-shelled eggs but do not lay as many as conventional laying breeds. Breeds that fall into this category would include Rhode Island Red and New Hampshire breeds.

Turkeys, Geese, Ducks, and Gamebirds – These birds can be raised as pets or for egg production or meat purposes. The nutrition they require is different than that of chickens but the basics are the same. Famo Feeds carries a line of products specifically designed for the needs of ducks and gamebirds.

General Poultry Care:

Water – free access to clean water should be provided at all time. During brooding, clean and disinfect waterers daily. When moving birds, give them access to water first before placing feed into feeders (prevents dehydration).

Alternative bedding options: Some backyard flocks will use grass clippings or shredded leaves. Use caution if you decide to go this direction. Grass clippings tend to retain moisture and break down quickly. They can also get smelly fast. If you choose to use clippings make sure they are from a yard that has not been sprayed with pesticides, fungicides, herbicides, etc. Finely shredded dry leaves may be used as another option. However, they are susceptible to harboring moisture and matting together. Wet leaves will make a slippery surface leaving chickens vulnerable to splayed legs. Some small producers choose to use puppy pads in brooders for easy clean up and convenience. This is a viable option; however, it can get costly.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Is providing free-choice oyster shells to my laying hens necessary?

Providing laying hens with oyster shells is a great idea for supplementing calcium. While Famo Feeds' layer feeds are formulated with high levels of calcium, having an additional source is helpful as calcium needs may vary based on age, production level, environmental factors, etc. Free-choice oyster shells will allow your hens to take in calcium as they need it. This will help to prevent soft eggshells, prolapses, and other health issues.

My birds keep pecking each other, what do I do?

Birds may begin to peck at each other for various reasons. Make sure that your birds aren't overcrowded as this can increase aggressive behavior. If there is one specific bird that is being aggressive it should be removed from the flock.

My hens have stopped laying eggs. What's wrong?

Chances are your hens are molting. Molting typically occurs in fall and involves the hens losing their feathers to grow new ones. Feathers may grow back in as little as 3 – 4 weeks or as much as 12 – 16 weeks depending on feather loss. Try to keep the stress level down and limit handling of birds during this time. After molting, hens will begin laying again; however, their production will be decreased some.

Is Amprolium an antibiotic?

Amprolium is not an antibiotic; it is referred to as a coccidiostat. This means that it is used to treat coccidiosis which is an intestinal parasite common in poultry and other livestock.

Bedding Options:

Choosing the appropriate bedding for your poultry is not a one-size-fits-all decision. Below is a comparison:

Type	Safe for:	Pros	Cons
Hay/Straw	✓Brooders ✓Coops	· All natural, low cost option. ·Easy clean up. ·Good, springy texture for feet and legs, and a soft-landing place for eggs.	· Can mold quickly causing potential respiratory issues for both birds and humans. Not recommended for wet/ humid environments.
Pine Shavings	✓Brooders ✓Coops	· Very popular choice that is easy to find in many feed and pet supply stores. · Pine shaving dry quickly and don't break down too fast. · Pleasant, non-irritating scent	· Can potentially be messy if (and when) chicks scratch and kick at it. Works best if the walls of the brooder are small wire mesh or solid walls. · Day old chicks may try to eat shavings. Cover the shavings with paper towel to avoid ingestion or use an alternative bedding material.
Cedar Shavings	✓Coops	· An alternative to pine shavings. · Many of the same benefits of pine shavings. · Natural insect-repellent. · More expensive than pine shavings.	· The strong scent of cedar shavings may be an issue for young birds in a brooder. If used, cedar shavings are only recommended for adult flocks.
Sand	✓Brooders ✓Coops	· Very clean choice for those with time to tend to it. If diligently cared for, sand only needs to be replaced once or twice/year. · Dries quickly, easy to scoop out with kitty litter scoop (smaller coops). · Great for outdoor runs as it drains quickly. · Doubles as dust bath for chickens. · Make sure to use builder's sand and not sandbox sand (too fine and tends to clump).	· Higher initial expense. · Needs more attention than other options. · Can become compacted if not cleaned often enough or exposed to excess moisture.
Paper/ Newspaper	✓Brooders ✓Coops	· Great low/no cost option. · Easy to clean.	· Ink may be toxic to chickens if ingested. · Glassy paper, like those in magazines and flyers, contain large amounts of ink and can easily become matted. · Can create a slippery surface leading to splayed lags, especially in young birds. · Recommend using along with another type of bedding to prevent slipping.

Grit – only necessary when birds have access to coarse litter or whole grains. Grit intake should be 1 lb/100 lb of feed or 2 lb/100 birds/week. Grit can either be blended into the ration or fed separately. If a commercial feed is being used, grit isn't needed because they feed has already been ground.

Feed – commercial feeds are readily available (like Famo Feeds' Poultry Line). Do not allow feeders to run empty or for stale feed to build up. Any feed that appears moldy, musty, or otherwise unfit should not be fed.

Starting Hatchlings

Prepare for the arrival

Remove all old litter

Clean the house using an approved disinfectant. Take time to disinfect all equipment, as well.

Air out the house – leave it empty and open for 2 weeks before bringing in new birds. If possible, fumigate.

Lay down about 4 in of clean, dry litter (litter paper, pine shavings or sawdust).

Set up chick guards to keep new birds close to heat, feed, and water.

Bring house up to brooding temperature the day before delivery.

Have a minimum of 2 heat lamps in the event one burns out.

Fill waterers 3 – 4 hours before arrival.

Arrival & Brooding

While unloading hatchlings into brooding area, individually dip their beaks into the water.

Allow birds 3 – 4 hours to drink before giving any feed (this encourages them to drink and prevents dehydration).

Water: Birds should have ¼ in of trough space per bird or 1 gallon capacity per 25 birds.

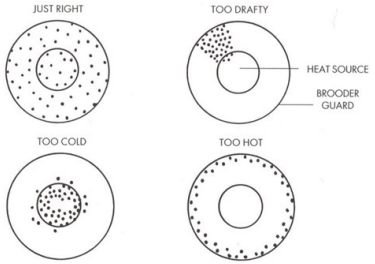
Feeders: at least 1 ft. long per 15 hatchlings.

Brooding

* Remember to clean wet areas around waterers and feeders daily to prevent health issues from an unsanitary environment.
* Use brooder litter paper for starting chicks to prevent consumption of litter.
* Either heat lamps or brooder stoves may be used.

Arrival & Brooding (cont'd)

- Hold to a maximum of 350 birds/stove or 75 birds/heat lamp.
- Use a minimum of 2 heat lamps in the event that one burns out.
- Temperature at chick level should be 90°F.
- Temperature should be reduced by 5°F/week until a minimum of 65°F is reached.
- Utilize a chick guard to keep chicks close to heat, feed, and water for first 10 days. A chick guard can be made from 18 – 24 in cardboard.
- Gradually expand the chick guards to allow more space and remove after 1 week.
- See diagram at right to ensure your brooder is at the correct temperature.



Poultry Feed Budget:

Newly Hatched		
Type	Feeding Period	Total Amount of Feed (per bird)
Layer chicks	First 10 weeks	9 – 10 lb
Broiler Chicks	First 6 weeks	8 – 9 lb
Turkeys	First 12 weeks	72 lb
Geese	First 8 weeks	53 lb
Ducks	First 8 weeks	22 lb
Gamebirds	First 8 weeks	9 lb
Feeding Amounts for Laying Birds		
Type	Total Amount of Feed	
Chickens	1.5 lb/bird/week	
Turkeys	4 – 5 lb/bird/week	
Geese	3 lb/bird/week	
Gamebirds	1 – 1.5 lb/bird/week	

*These values are estimates only. Feed intake will vary depending on size, breed, activity, temperature, and environment.

Roosting and Nest Spaces

- Though not essential, roosts may be provided for growing and mature birds at 6 in of space/bird.
- In the effort to keep eggs clean, nests should be provided to laying hens (1 per 4 hens). Place nests in a darker area of the house to prevent floor eggs. Make sure to fill nests with enough litter to prevent eggs from breaking.

Space Requirements*

Type	Age (weeks)	Floor Space	Feeder Space (linear inches)	Water Space (linear inches)
Layers	0 – 2	10.0 in^2	1.0	0.25
	2 – 6	0.7 ft^2	2.0	0.5
	6+	1.25 ft^2	3.0	1.0
Broilers	0 – 1	10.0 in^2	1.0	0.25
	1 – 6	1.0 ft^2	2.5	0.5
	6+	1.5 ft^2	4.0	1.0

*These values are absolute minimums per bird.

Light Management:

- Chicks should be placed under 24 hours of light for the first week which can then be dropped gradually to 10 hours/day.
- Broilers can follow a natural day length with at least 14 hours of light.
- Day length has a significant impact on laying hen egg production and should never be reduced.
- Laying hens should have around 15 hours of light and at least 8 hours of continuous black-out per 24 hour period.
- One 60-watt bulb is adequate for laying hens and young birds.
- One 25-watt bulb/200 ft^2 floor space is adequate for growing pullets, broilers, and capons.

Ambient Temperature:

- For birds over 4 weeks of age, the ambient temperature should be between 65° and 75°F.
- Temperatures above or below this can reduce production and/or growth efficiency.
- Keep the environment healthy. Good ventilation is critical to keep the temperature consistent and prevent a buildup of ammonia and dust.
- Remember that more ventilation is needed during warmer months to prevent excess heat and humidity in poultry barns.