# **CHICKENS** Beyond The Basics





Kimberly McCourtney, Sales Manager Alaska Garden & Pet Supply, Inc

### LET'S TALK ABOUT CHICKS

- Benefits/Negatives
- Vocabulary
- Getting Started: Brooding, and Starting Other Poultry
- Shelter & Safety
- Water, Food and Supplemental Feeding
- Composting, More on Eggs, Slaughter, and Just for Fun
- References





## **BENEFITS OF RAISING CHICKS**

- Fresh eggs
- Fresh meat
- Pest and weed control
- Supply of nitrogen-rich manure
- Projects for kids
- Family pet
- FUN and social birds

## THE NEGATIVES

- Probably more expensive
- They need daily care
- Odor
- Noise roosters get up early
- Potential for disease

### Bears, wolves, and dogs all love chickens!

## PICK CHICKS FOR:

- Egg Color: white, brown, colored
- Meat production
- Show
- Pets
- Cold-weather tolerant



## WHAT SHOULD YOU EXPECT?





How many chickens should you get?

- May be determined by local ordinances and neighborhood covenants
- How much time do you have?
- How many eggs do you want?

### Baby chicks grow up.

- Plan for housing, protection, space
- Chickens begin laying at 18-20 weeks
- Hens eventually stop laying; will they become pets?

### CHICKEN VOCABULARY

- Chick: young (baby) chicken
- Pullet: immature female chicken or turkey (0-20 weeks)
- Layer: adult female chicken producing eggs (4-5+ months old)
- Broiler/Fryer: a young chicken being raised for meat
- Hen: adult female chicken
- Rooster: adult male chicken
- Cull: to remove a chicken from the flock because of productivity, age, health, or personality issues (i.e., overly aggressive or timid, egg eating, etc.)
- Flock: a group of chickens

- Brood/Broodiness: the desire for hens to sit on eggs to hatch
- Molt: Chickens process of shedding its' feathers and re-growing new ones.
- Vent: external opening of a chicken through which all waste matter and eggs pass.



### **CHICKEN ANATOMY**



>>> GETTING STARTED

### **BEFORE THE CHICKS ARRIVE**

#### Basic preparation increases success

- Home environment:
  - Dry and clean
  - Correct temperature
  - Draft free
  - Spacing
  - H<sub>2</sub>O & Feeders
  - Clean & disinfect everything before chicks arrive
    - House, waterers, feeders
    - Disinfect regularly 1:10 bleach water dilution
  - Bedding 2-5" Deep
    - Wood shavings, straw or shredded newspaper
    - No cedar



Purchase Chicks from a reputable hatchery or feed dealer

Suggest chicks be vaccinated for Marek's Disease and coccidiosis



### CHIKC STARTER CHECKLIST

Get the feed, supplies and everything you need to start your backyard flock!

- Shelter/Containment
- Heat Lamp & Bulb
- Bedding
- Feeder
- Waterer

Vitamins/Electrolytes (water soluble)





### **BROODING CHICKS**

Avoid the "Big Chill"

#### **Brooding Chicks**

Day old chicks: pre-heat area to 90° - 95° with heat lamp/light bulb approx 20" above chicks

- Place thermometer at chick level
- Comfort can be observed
  - If chicks huddle together under light it's too cold
  - If chicks huddle in corners it's too hot
- Reduce 5° each week until 65° minimum









### GOOD TEMPERATURE CONTROL



**These chicks are perfect!** 

### STARTING "OTHER" POULTRY

#### Turkey Poults

- Slow to understand eating & drinking: monitor
- To get started dip beaks in H<sub>2</sub>O & feed
- Turkey Starter (0-8 weeks)
- Turkey Grower/Finisher (9–18 weeks)

#### Ducklings/Goslings

- May swim in H<sub>2</sub>O after 4 weeks
- Keep dry until then
- Place marbles in waterer to reduce splashing
- Duck & Goose Starter, non-medicated
- Duck & Goose Maintenance

#### Wild Bird

- Wild Game Bird Starter
- Wild Gamer Bird Grower

all feeds are non-medicated









### FEEDER, WATER, FLOOR SPACE and LIGHTING

	Min FEEDER SPACE (Per 10 birds)	Min WATER SPACE (Per 10 birds)	Min FLOOR SPACE (Per bird)	ARTIFICAL LIGHTS	FEEDING RECOMMENDATIONS
Chicks Layer & Broiler (0-8 weeks)	1.5 linear ft	1 quart or less	Minimum 10 sq in <i>Max</i> 1-2sq ft	21-23 hours reduce to 15-16 hours by 3 weeks	CHICK STARTER Apprx total feed per Bird Light Breeds: 3 lbs Heavy Breeds: 4 lbs
Layer Pullets (8-16 weeks)	2.5 - 3.5 linear ft	1-2 gallons	2-3 sq ft	After 3 weeks reduce to hours as dictated by natural length of day <b>not under 12 hours</b>	PULLET GROWER Introduce SCRATCH & TREATS Apprx total feed per Bird Light Breeds: 13 lbs Heavy Breeds: 17 lbs
<b>Laying Hens</b> (16 months & Up)	4.0 linear ft	2-3 gallons	3-6 sq ft	15-17 hours of light	LAYER 16% or 20% ALL PURPOSE POULTRY SCRATCH, GRIT, OYSTER SHELLS Apprx total feed per Bird Light Breeds: 1.5 lbs/week Heavy Breeds: 2 lbs/week
Broilers (all ages)	4.0 linear ft	2-3 gallons	3-5 sq ft	15-17 hours until processed	BROILER GROWER FINISHER Apprx total feed per Bird 10-12 lbs to reach butchering weight

LINEAR FOOT: one foot of feeding space or watering space. For example, a 6 ft feeder open on both sides has 12 linear ft of space.

>>> SHELTER & SAFETY

### **SHELTERING METHODS**

Free Range - No confinement. Seen most in rural areas.

Pastured/Range Fed, Day Range – Confinement to a portable shelter with a fenced foraging area. Used in family gardens or farms.

Yarding - Confinement to a permanent building with an outdoor fenced yard. Used in small backyards.

Loose Housing - Confinement within permanent building. Generally used for raising broilers or breeders or maintaining a flock during cold wet weather.

Hutch - Cage confinement. Most often used in urban and suburban area or for show birds.





## WHEN CAN CHICKS GO OUTSIDE?

 Once they have all of their adult feathers at 5 to 6 weeks

 Still may need a heat lamp in coop at night or to regulate temperature

## KEEPING YOUR CHICKENS SAFE

- Enclose outside run on all sides and top
- Bury wire screen at least 6 inches deep at perimeter of pen
- Use latches with a spring catch on any openings
- If you free range your chickens during the day, be sure the enclosure is fenced or keep watch on them
- Use small-opening welded wire screen (1" x ½")
- Electric Fence
  - ♦ 5,000-7,000 volt pulses
  - 14 gauge wire
  - Wire running 6–12" apart









### BE BEAR AWARE!

Electric fences have three main parts.

When used properly all three components create an open circuit, which closes when touched by a bear.

1.An electrical device called **a charger or energizer** pushes and regulates power through the wires of the fence. Chargers that plug into household current (110 Volts Alternating Current--AC) also convert this current to voltage in direct current (DC). These devices, weighing only a pound or two, have been used for many years on farms and ranches to contain livestock. What works to keep cattle and horse in, also works to keep bears out!

1. Fence chargers should deliver between 5,000 and 7,000 volts

2.Joule ratings between 0.25 and 0.70 have proven effective for deterring bears







**1.The wires** of the fence carry the electrical charge. This is the "hot" part of system. When wires are touched, the bear is shocked. These wires are nothing more than un-insulated electrical wires set on posts to exclude a bear from a possible food source.

- 1.There are two choices for portable electric fencing: polywire and electro-plastic netting
- 2.Other fencing wire made of steel or aluminum (14 guage)
- 3.Recommend a minimum of 3 strands of wire for portable fences, with the lowest wire at 10-12 inches and the upper wire at about 40 inches above the soil.
- 1.The grounding rod is usually a 4 ft. by 5/8th in. rod of metal driven into the ground. The rod attracts the electrical current after it passes through the bear. The power is then returned to the energizer through a wire between the energizer and the Grounding rod. In order to be effective as a deterrent an electric fence must be properly grounded.





### **ANCHORAGE MUNICIPALITY REGULATIONS**



### **ANCHORAGE CHICKEN ORDINANCE**

Max Chickens Allowed	5 chickens per 6,000 sq ft +1 for each additional 1,000 sq ft
Roosters Allowed	No
Permit Required	No
Coop Restrictions	Minimum of 10 ft from property line

**NOTE:** Please make sure to double check that this information is accurate before you proceed with raising chickens. You can read more info about checking local laws <a href="http://community.adn.com/?q=adn/node/156678">http://community.adn.com/?q=adn/node/156678</a>



**»** FOOD & WATER

## THE IMPORTANCE OF H<sub>2</sub>O

- Disinfect waterers prior to use then weekly
- One 1-quart fount per 25 chicks
- Use fresh, cool (not cold) H<sub>2</sub>O refresh daily
- Dip beaks to induce drinking when chicks arrive
- Elevate waterer after 1<sup>st</sup> week to keep clean
- Waterer should not be higher than chick's back
- Double H<sub>2</sub>O available capacity at 6 weeks
- Put marbles in waterer to keep chicks dry
- The average chicken drinks between 1-2 cups of water/daily
  - Age: older chickens drink more
  - Layers: drink twice as much
  - Ambient temperature: drink 2-4x as much in warm water
  - Time of day: dawn and dusk

- Ideal water temperature: 50-55 °F
- Chicken's body contains more than 50% water and an egg is 65% water





### TYPES OF FEED

Mash: ground to various degrees of coarseness. Chicks pick through, typical form for home-mix rations. Warm mashes are great for cold winter temperatures and very palatable.

Pellets: compressed, shaped. Each pellet has identical nutritional value. Complete and balanced. Often least wasted feed form.

Crumbles: crushed pellets. Baby birds and adults. Take longer to eat. Less boredom. Easily wasted.

Scratch: mixture containing a least two kinds of grain (usually cracked corn, wheat, oats. Scratch is high in energy, low in vitamins, minerals, and protein). Great "activity" diet. Never feed to birds under 8 weeks. It's like candy = feed sparingly.

Grit: Sand and small pebbles eaten by a chicken: used by its gizzard to grind up grain and plant fiber. Grit is not necessary when feeding pellets or crumbles.

Sprouting or Fodder: the practice of growing grains to an eatable state.



### WHEN TO CHANGE FEEDS

	LAYERS	BROILERS	TURKEYS, DUCKS, GEESE,	
тсн			AND WILD GAME BIRDS	
-6 eks	Chick Starter	Broiler Grower Finisher	DUCK & GOOSE STARTER Turkey Starter Wild Game Bird Starter	
-10 eeks	Pullet Grower Scratch			
i-20 eeks	LAYER - 16% - 20% All Purpose Poultry Scratch Grit Oyster Shells	Start more birds	DUCK & GOOSE MAINTENANCE Turkey Grower Wild Gamer Bird Grower All Purpose Poultry	
		M	ADE IN ALASKA	

HAT

4wee

> 8wee

16wee

### **CHICKEN FEED MATH**

#### 10 BROILERS

#### 120 lbs of Broiler Grower

50# AMF Broiler= \$18.75 50# AMF NCNS Broiler = \$25.75 40# S/P Organic SF Broiler = \$38.99

#### ESTIMATED FEED COST Chicks through Slaughter

AMF = \$56.25 or 0.56/lb AMF NCNS = \$77.25 or \$0.77/lb Organic = \$116.97 or \$1.16/lb

\*assuming each bird weighs 10 lbs at slaughter. Not including cost of processing.

Current Fred Meyer Price \$0.99/lb

#### CHICK STARTER

Apprx total feed per Bird Light Breeds: 3 lbs Heavy Breeds: 4 lbs

#### PULLET GROWER Introduce SCRATCH & TREATS

Apprx total feed per Bird Light Breeds: 13 lbs Heavy Breeds: 17 lbs

#### LAYER 16% or 20% ALL PURPOSE POULTRY SCRATCH, GRIT, OYSTER SHELLS

Apprx total feed per Bird Light Breeds: 1.5 lbs/week Heavy Breeds: 2 lbs/week

#### **BROILER GROWER FINISHER**

Apprx total feed per Bird 10-12 lbs to reach butchering weight

#### **10 CHICKS to LAYERS**

#### 40 lbs of chick starter

50# AMF Chick Starter = \$19.50 50# AMF NCNS Chick Starter = \$26.50 40# S/P Organic NF Chick Start = \$39.99

#### 170 lbs of pullet grower

50# AMF Pullet Grower = \$18.25 40# S/P Organic NF Grower = \$35.99

#### 80 lbs layer/month

50# AMF Layer 20% = \$18.00 50# AMF NCNS 16% = \$24.75 40# S/P Organic NF Layer 18% = \$34.99

ESTIMATED FEED COST Chicks through First Month of Laying

AMF = \$110.25 = \$36/month \$12/dozen eggs AMF NCNS = \$149.00 + \$49.50/month \$16.5/dozen eggs Organic = \$253.93 + \$69.98/month \$23.32/dozen eggs

\*assuming you get 3 dozen eggs each Month

Current Fred Meyer Price for Simple Truth Cage Free Eggs \$2.99

## IS A CALCIUM SUPPLEMENT NECESSARY?

- High levels required for egg production
- If not provided in adequate quantities, hens will pull calcium from their skeleton causing weak and easily broken bones
- Calcium levels in layer diets are too high for young chicks or growing pullets. If fed, could lead to leg abnormalities.
- Feed a layer diet at first egg, but not before pullets are 16 weeks old.

### <u>OYSTER SHELLS</u>

- Extensively used in the poultry industry
- Very high in calcium
- Good for egg shell formation and strong, thick shells
- Never feed oyster shell to chickens under 18 weeks



### SUPPLEMENTAL FEEDING



#### SPROUTS VS FODDER

Spouts and fodder are simply different stages of the same germinated grains.

Sprouts are germinated seeds grown to *less than 4" in height.* 

**Fodder** is grown from the same germinated seeds to a height *greater than 4" high*.

#### **BENEFITS**

- Year Round Fresh Greens
- Entertainment
- · Bioavailability of vitamins, minerals, and proteins
- Increased digestibility

#### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Whole Grains such as Alfalfa, Barley, Wheat, Oats
- Plastic container with drain holes
- Water

#### <u> HOW TO</u>

**DAY 1:** In a large bowl or flat tray, cover the grains with fresh water and soak a minimum of 8 hours to a maximum of 24 hours. Create holes in the chosen container that are small enough that the grain doesn't fall through them. Rinse seeds well before leaving to soak. The water should be clear.



**DAY 2:** At the end of the soaking period, drain grains well and spread them to  $\frac{1}{4}$ " -  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch deep in chosen container.

Place container over a second, slightly larger container to allow the water to drain off the grains

SEED GERMINATION TEMPERATURE is ideally 60-65\*F. If it is too warm, mold will grow,

**DAY 3- 5**: The sprouts should be watered and then drained fully twice each day for six days. It is better to slightly over water than under water. Drainage is key, do not let seeds sit in water.

**DAY 5**: *REMEMBER:* in order to keep your sprouted fodder growing in a cycle for fresh fodder every day, be sure to start a new batch of seeds every day.

DAY 6-9, the sprouted grains are ready to be fed to the flock. To Harvest, flip over your tray. You the matting into smaller portions.



### **SUPPLEMENTAL FEEDING**

#### FERMENTING FEED

The fermentation process uses naturally occurring bacteria to partially break down the food, improving its enzyme content and increasing its levels of vitamins B, C and K. It also makes food more digestible, and boosts the "usable" protein level by about 12%.

#### **BENEFITS**

- The other benefits to using fermented feed:
- Feed consumption and waste will drop by 1/2 to 3/4 (this will save you money)
- Poultry on a diet of fermented feed are generally healthier and less likely to contract disease
- There is almost zero waste as chickens don't scratch through it, kicking it out of the feeder
- Stools become more solid and many people report less smell in the coop and run!
- Egg yolks of eggs laid by hens on fermented feed will become noticeably larger, and shells will be more solid.

#### HOW TO

- Use high quality feed, whether it is scratch, whole grains, or seeds, even pellets are ok.
- Use either a glass or BPA-free plastic container
- Fill container about 1/3 to  $\frac{1}{2}$  full with feed
- Add enough dechlorinated water to cover the grains by a couple of inches
- Place lid on container and leave it at room temperature for 3-4 days. Stir at least once a day and add water as needed.
- You are done when you start to see bubbles on the surface. The stop layer may seem filmy and foamy. Your can strain the feed off.
- Correctly fermented feed should smell good: fruity and tart like yogurt
- Do not feed if it smells sour, unpleasant, like alcohol or yeast. Never feed if you see mold.







### SUPPLEMENTAL FEEDING

#### ♦ FLOCK BLOCK™

- Similar to Scratch
- Whole Grain Supplement
- Restores Pecking Instincts
- Going on Vacation?
  - ♦ Try Flock Block™ !
  - 25# Block Feeds up to 25 birds for 2-3 days (maybe longer)





#### DIATOMACEOUS EARTH

A naturally occurring fine powder composed of the fossilized remains of microscopic diatoms

Dries out cage floor waste, lessening odor, and reducing fly populations
Daily use in feed provides your birds with valuable trace minerals that results in better feathering and egg production





# COMPOSTING MORE ON EGGS SLAUGHTER JUST FOR FUN

### <u>COMPOSTING</u>

#### Larger Cycle

- Vegetarian table scraps and food prep to into the chicken run
- 6-12 chickens eat the scraps along with bugs, worms, and greens
- Chicken manure & pine shavings are collected form the coop
- Manure & pine shavings are added to the compost along with water and additional "brown" items
- Compost is added to vegetable garden and flower beds as natural, organic fertilizer
- Vegetables are gown for the dinner table

#### **Smaller Cycles**

- Chickens lay fresh organic eggs that are used in meals but egg shells can be ground up and added to the compost pile
- Non-edible garden and flower bed greens can be added directly into the compost pile.



- Compost is used to fertilize the lawn
- Lawn clipping and fall leaves are added to chicken run
- The chickens scratch through the clipping and leaves eating bugs and greens
- Collections from the run are added to the compost pile.

### MORE ABOUT EGG LAYERS

#### Proper Egg Cleaning and Handling

- Collect eggs twice a day
- Brush off debris
- No Wash or Not to Wash?
  - No washing
  - Wash with FDA Egg Wash/90\* Water
- Cool and Dry eggs
  - Store large end up
  - Refrigerated = maintain grade up to 4 weeks
  - Room temp = can drop on grade per day

## Sorting & Grading Eggs

#### Candling

- Hold at angle, rotate with thumb
- Shell: oval, large on one end, no cracks, thin spots or ridges
- Air Depth: fresh eggs not > 1/8 inch
- White or Albumen: Yolk stays in place when turned = firm, thick white



#### Candling an egg.



### MORE ABOUT EGG LAYERS

Quality Factor	AA Quality	A Quality	B Quality	Inedible
Shell	Clean	Clean	Clean to slightly stained**	Dirty
	Unbroken; practically normal	Unbroken; practically normal	Unbroken; abnormal	Broken, cracked and/or leaking
Air Cell	⅓ inch or less in depth	3∕1e inch or less in depth	More than ⅔₁₀ inch in depth	Doesn't apply
White	Clear, firm	Clear, reasonably firm	Weak and watery	
Yolk	Outline slightly defined	Outline fairly well defined	Outline clearly visible	Doesn't apply
Spots (blood or meat)	None	None	Blood or meat spots aggregating not more than 1/s inch in diameter	Blood or meat spots aggregating more than 1/8 inch in diameter

#### Egg Sizing Chart

Size or weight class	Minimum net weight per dozen
Jumbo	30 ounces
Extra large	27 ounces
Large	24 ounces
Medium	21 ounces
Small	18 ounces
Peewee	15 ounces

### PROCESSING BIRDS

#### <u>SETUP</u>

- Knives: 2 or more, 4-6" in length
- Killing Cone
- Buckets/Pails: blood, feathers, guts, and water, meat
- Water: Steady supply of fresh water and HOT water
- Table
- Scalding Tank: think turkey fryer
- Thermometer
- Cutting Board
- Paper Towels
- Storage Bags





### PROCESSING BIRDS

- Hang birds up side down or insert into cone
- 2. Cut Jugular Vein
- 3. Scald Bird: water temp 135-140\*
- 4. Begin Plucking
- 5. Remove oil gland: found at base of tail can ruin the taste of meat
- 6. Remove Feet
- 7. Remove head, neck, and crop
- 8. Open body cavity and eviscerate
- 9. Chill in ice-water for at least 30 minutes to 1 hour
- 10. Age Meat before freezing in refrigerator or meat will be tough

For 6- to 8-week-old broilers, age 36 hours For 10- to 12-week-old birds, age for a full 48 hours











### JUST FOR FUN

#### **CHICKEN DIAPERS**

- These custom reusable garments will allow your bird to have freedom of movement in your home without the mess.
- Correctly worn and maintained, the bird's feathers will stay clean under most circumstances.
- The droppings are channeled away from the bird into a containment pouch to keep the feathers from getting soiled regardless whether the bird is standing or lying down.
- The design allows the bird to preen and access its oil gland and will not interfere with its everyday activities. The diaper is adjustable, and is suitable for both growing and adult birds.
- <u>www.chickendiapers.com</u> or <u>www.pamperyourpoultry.com</u>



• Flexible, breathable, safe, effective, and cruelty free

www.nocrowroostercollars.com









# <u>REFERENCES</u>

#### **BOOKS & PUBLICATIONS**

Storey's Guide to Raising Chickens, Gail Damerow

The 4-H Guide to Raising Chickens, Tara Kindschi

Applied Animal Nutrition, Feeds and Feeding, Peter R. Cheeke

*Selecting, Brooding & Rearing Small Numbers of Chicks*, Alaska Livestock Series LPM-00840, UAF Cooperative Extension Service

#### KNOWLEDGEABLE PEOPLE

Lucy Peckham, The Coalition for Backyard Pets, 907-346-4615

US Cooperative Extension Offices Palmer 907-745-3360 Anchorage 907-786-6300

Local Feed Stores: Alaska Mill & Feed, M Bar D, Pet Zoos, Underdog Feed

Alaska Farm & Food & Alaska Chook Nook



#### THE VET WILL SEE YOU NOW

- Chester Valley Veterinarian 333-6591
- College Village Animal Clinic 274-5623
- VCA Alaska Pet Care 562-7387
- ✤ Hillside Pet Clinic 344-7913
- Diamond Animal Hospital & Emergency Services 562-8384
- ♦ The Pet Stop 522–1006
- ✤ Ravenwood Vet Clinic 694-9665
- North Star Animal Hospital 746-7387
- Palmer Veterinary Clinic 745-3219
- ♦ Wasilla Vet Clinic 376-3993

# <u>REFERENCES</u>

WEBSITES Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Electric Fences as Bear Deterrents.

http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=livingwithbears.bearfences

The Backyard Chicken, www.backyardchickens.com

Factors Affecting Egg Production in Backyard Chicken Flocks <u>http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ps029</u>

Winter Chicken Care, <u>www.plamondon.com</u>

Artificial Lighting for Hens, <u>www.plamondon.com</u>

#### **NEWSPAPER ARTICLES & MAGAZINES**

"Rise of the Backyard Chicken", Kathleen McCoy, KSKA, www.alaskapublic.org, published 07/01/2011

"Chicken U.", Todd Disher, The Frontiersman, published 11/05/2009

http://naturalchickenkeeping.blogspot .com/p/fermented-feed.html



# The End



### **Questions?**