

# COCKADOODLE NEWS

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## COMMONLY USED CHICKEN WORDS:

**Hen**= Full grown female chicken.

**Rooster/Cock**= Full grown male chicken

**Pullet**= Female chicken under one year old

**Cockerel**= Male chicken under one year old

**Bantam/Banty**= Almost half the size of a normal sized chicken

**Layer**= Hen that is or will be able to produce eggs

**Broiler**= A chicken used for meat production

**Molt**= Yearly shedding of feathers; chickens will not lay during this cycle

**Sexing chicks**= Separation of pullet and cockerel chicks

**Straight-Run**= Chicks that are not sexed, a mix of pullets and cockerels

**Flock**= A number of chickens that are raised together

**Dual-Purpose**= A chicken that has good egg production as well as good meat production

## HELPFUL HINTS:

-Meat birds usually will eat 2 pounds of feed per pound of body weight

-For chicks it is good to add vitamins and electrolytes into their water to keep them healthy

-A good worming method to use for your chickens is "Wazine" (use as directed on bottle)

-If you want a processing plant to harvest your Cornish X or Turkeys then be sure to schedule your appointment as soon as you get your chicks (appointments are usually AT LEAST a few weeks out)

-The least amount of space you should plan to have per bird when making a coop is 3-5 square feet, it would be even better if you could have up to 10 square feet per bird.

-Your hens can share 1 nesting box to every 3 chickens.

## Questioning getting chickens?

Chickens are fairly quite animals and can also be maintained at a decent price. Surprisingly, chickens do not take a lot of time to take care of either. After a coop is built and the supplies are inside, the rest becomes fairly easy. You should not have to spend more than 30 minutes on your layers a day, most days will probably be closer to 15 or 20 minutes. Other than that, the most time you will spend in your coop and with your chickens will be when you are cleaning.

## **PICKING THE BREED FOR YOU:**



### **Silkie Bantams**

The Silkie Bantams originated from both Japan and China. They were named because of their feathers being so soft and silk like. The other interesting thing about these birds is they literally have feathers everywhere, even their feet. Their looks, attitudes, and mothering instincts are so unique compared to the more standard breeds, which makes it fun to include a few of these in your very own flock. Also, these birds do have bantam in their name. Since

bantam does mean they are about half the size of a normal chicken, their eggs will be about half the size as well. Even with a small body and small eggs, they are still incredible birds and lay very tasty white eggs.

*Ave. Fully Grown Male Weight: 36 oz.*

*Ave. Fully Grown Female Weight: 32 oz.*



### **Frizzle Cochon Bantams**

Frizzle Cochons are also feather legged bantams like the silkies. However the frizzles are even more unique. The feathers of a frizzle actually curve outward and forward and make the chickens always look like they just got out of bed and forgot to brush their hair. As chicks, it is a lot harder to see the curvy feathers. It takes quite a while for frizzle feathers to finally look the way they are supposed to, which makes these birds look very odd through their

teenage years.

*Ave. Fully Grown Male Weight: 32 oz.*

*Ave. Fully Grown Female Weight: 28 oz.*



### **Australorp**

Australorps also got their name for a reason; they were invented in Australia from the crossing of a Rhode Island Red and Black Orpington. These chickens are known to have very high egg production (brown eggs). As well as having a high egg production, these birds are also dual-purpose (good for meat too). If you are looking for both egg layers and meat production, then it may be a

good idea to get straight run Australorp chicks and use the hens for laying and the roosters for eating.

*Ave. Fully Grown Male Weight: 8.5 lbs.*

*Ave. Fully Grown Female Weight: 6.5 lbs.*



### **Barred Rocks**

Barred rocks started in New England and the reasoning for their name is because of their colors being both black and white, also known as barred. If you only want to start with a few birds, Barred Rocks are a great choice. They are average in egg production (brown eggs), voice volume, and attitude making them easily adaptable to any setting or flock.

*Ave. Fully Grown Male Weight: 9.5 lbs.*

*Ave. Fully Grown Female Weight: 7.5 lbs.*



### **Rhode Island Red**

Rhode Island chickens definitely got their name from our home country. These birds are able to use as dual-purpose, but are more often used for their excellent egg production. Rhode Island chickens can be known to be more aggressive, even more so the roosters than the hens, but with this trait, they are able to keep their flock safe from outside dangers. This particular breed can be louder than others and also are not the broodiest, instead they are more adventurous. The huge plus that comes with these birds is consistent egg production (brown eggs).

*Ave. Fully Grown Male Weight: 8.5 lbs.*

*Ave. Fully Grown Female Weight: 6.5 lbs.*



### **Ameraucana**

Ameraucana can sound like the name may have come from our very own country, but in fact it has originated from South America as an Araucana. The breed's name was changed after it arrived in the states but still has the same background as the original Araucana. Ameraucana's are well known for their puffy cheeks and very large eyes. They have similarities of a Rhode Island but Ameraucana's are not as loud. Not only is their productivity very high but they also lay uniquely colored eggs, either blue or green.

*Ave. Fully Grown Male Weight: 5 lbs.*

*Ave. Fully Grown Female Weight: 4 lbs.*



### Jersey Giant

Jersey Giant got its name from our home as well. These birds are one of the best choices for a dual-purpose breed. Even the hens, when full grown, can tower over the regular sized chickens. Hens can definitely weigh 10 pounds when full grown, so the roosters are easily considered to be “Giant”, and that’s exactly why they got their name. Being on the heavier side, these birds are more calm and easy to work with. This particular breed is also one of the quietest breeds. The only thing that is tough with these birds is instead of taking a year to fully mature, they can take up to two years. However, they are very dependable layers (brown eggs) and work exceptionally well for meat production.

*Ave. Fully Grown Male Weight: 13 lbs.*

*Ave. Fully Grown Female Weight: 10 lbs.*



### Orpingtons

Coming from England, the Orpington chickens made their way over to America. Orpingtons can be considered dual-purpose chickens but are known more for their broody personality. Full grown these chickens fill out with fat so that they can keep warm during the winter and keep their eggs warm and safe while brooding. Another good thing about Orpingtons is that they are easy to handle and have a steady egg production (brown eggs). Buff orpingtons are the most common type of orpington and the most broody. You can never go wrong adding an orpington to your flock, especially if you are hoping to hatch some baby chicks or just want a friendly, calm, quiet chicken.

*Ave. Fully Grown Male Weight: 10 lbs.*

*Ave. Fully Grown Female Weight: 8 lbs.*



### Sex-Links

Black Sex Links are a cross between a Rhode Island Male and Barred Rock. The Gold Sex Links are a cross between a Rhode Island Red Male and Rhode Island White Female. Both kinds of sex links are excellent layers and produce large brown eggs. These chickens are sometimes used in commercial layer operations.

*Ave. Fully Grown Male Weight: 8 lbs.*

*Ave. Fully Grown Female Weight: 6 lbs.*



### Leghorns

White Leghorns are one of the most popular chickens used for white eggs. You will find that a lot of commercial white eggs come from leghorns. These chickens lay very large eggs and are highly recommend as proficient layers. Leghorns also have been known to have great resistance to disease.

*Ave. Fully Grown Male Weight: 6 lbs.*

*Ave. Fully Grown Female Weight: 4.5 lbs.*



### Welsummer

Welsummer chickens are known to produce dark brown eggs. They were created from a mixture of quite a few breeds, making it hard to trace back to exactly where they were originated. This breed happens to be one of the less friendly breeds but they are not angry by any means. Welsummers just enjoy doing their own thing.

*Ave. Fully Grown Male Weight:*

*Ave. Fully Grown Female Weight: 5 lbs.*



### Cuckoo Maran

Out of all the laying chickens, Marans lay one of the darkest brown eggs (chocolate eggs). The Welsummer egg looks light brown when sitting next to a Maran egg. Cuckoo Marans can be confused for barred rocks because of their white and black coloring; however the white and black lines are more blended together on Cuckoo Marans.

*Ave. Fully Grown Male Weight: 7 lbs.*

*Ave. Fully Grown Female Weight: 6 lbs.*



### Cornish X (cross)

### **MEAT BIRDS**

These are chickens that are specifically designed for meat production. Cornish will grow abnormally fast and usually only have a life span of about 7-9 weeks depending on how large you want them to finish out at. If you want a chicken that can lay, then this is definitely NOT the bird for you. Cornish X ARE NOT a

dual-breed chicken. Males will usually dress 3-5 lbs. depending on when they are butchered. Females usually take an extra week or more if you want them to dress out at the same weight as the males.

## **CHICK CARE**

### **Before the chicks arrive:**

Be prepared. Chicks have a lot of requirements that must be provided to them. Make sure you have a brooder house ready before arrival. Have your bedding, feeders, waters, feed and source of heat set up and ready to go.

Bedding such as shavings or straw must be provided for your chicks. Your bedding should be at least two inches deep and can vary depending on what you find out works best for you. Be sure to keep the bedding dry and change as necessary to provide chicks with a clean growing environment.

### **Before and After the chicks arrive:**

Chicks require an area of space that has a temperature of 90-95 degrees. The best way to test this is to put a thermometer on the ground right below where your lamp is hung. The lamp should start about 24 inches off the ground in the center of the brooding area. Make sure the area right below the lamp, is no higher than 95 degrees. The chicks will also need to have some room to get away from the heat if needed. However, the coolest spot in your brooder should only be as low as 70 degrees. Usually a 250 watt heat lamp will keep up to 25 chicks warm. If the thermometer shows higher or lower than 90-95 degrees, then either lower or higher your heat source to adjust the temperature. Every week you can decrease your temperature by 5 degrees until the whole brooding area is down to 70 degrees. Make sure to maintain a 70 degree temperature until birds are fully feathered. Remember to watch your birds during this whole process. If they are away from the heat as far as they can get, they are too hot. Chicks huddled together can suggest they are cold and possibly that there is a draft. Chicks spread all throughout the brooder and drinking and eating happily are content with the temperature. Start warming your brooder pen at least two days BEFORE your chicks arrive. Check the temperature of your brooder regularly once chicks are inside.

### **After the chicks arrive:**

Chicks MUST be provided with feed and water as soon as you receive them. Upon arrival, it is a good practice to dip the bird's beak into the water. This will show the bird where the water is. Provide one 24 inch feeder and one gallon chick fountain for each twenty-five chicks. Keep your feeders and waterers close to the heat source. Chicks will usually not stray very far from the heat to eat and drink. Change your water often and keep your feeders clean. This will keep your chicks healthy. Provide day old chicks, ducks and geese with chick starter mash. Turkeys and game birds require a higher protein feed such as Turkey or Game Bird Starter.

As your chicks grow, provide them with more space. This will reduce cannibalism, provide an area for them to exercise and reduce chance of disease. Should you have any questions either before your chicks arrive or after, please feel free to give us a call. We are open all year for your convenience.

#### **Feed for laying chickens:**

Union Mills Chick Starter Mash 1-3 weeks old

Union Mills Chick Starter Crumble 4-10 Weeks old

Union Mills Poultry Developer 10 weeks- laying

Union Mills Complete Lay Pellets for all laying hens

#### **Feed for meat birds:**

Union Mills Broiler Mash 1<sup>st</sup> week

Union Mills Broiler Pellet 2<sup>nd</sup> week-Butcher

DO NOT forget that ALL Chicks & Chickens need grit. Oyster shell should also be used for laying hens if their shells are too soft.

#### **Bloody eggs or shells?**

There can be a few reasons for bloody eggs or shells. One reason a chicken can have a bloody egg shell is from laying too early causing tissue tear and bleed. Sometimes too much protein is also able to cause blood on egg shells. The other thing that can definitely cause these symptoms is Coccidiosis. If a bird has Cocci they will have bloody shells and most likely blood droppings. Cocci is able to do this to the bird because it causes intestinal bleeding.

#### **Coccidiosis:**

Cocci(Coxy) is a common disease in baby chicks. Adult chickens are also capable of getting this disease, but it is far less likely. The most common time for Cocci to appear in chicks is at 3 to 6 weeks of age. There is a specific creature called Coccidia that are able to go inside a chick's intestines and multiply. The most common way for a chick to get this type of protozoa in their body is from dirty droppings in feed, water, or stool. There are medications available to PREVENT Cocci. Certain feed for baby chicks

have medication in them to make sure the chicks will not end up with Cocco. Another way to prevent Cocco is by keeping your chick area clean and dry. Also make sure that your chicks always have water and feed. Be sure to watch and see if there is enough room for all your chickens to eat and drink. If one or more chicks look like they are unable to get to the water or food supply then you might want to think about adding another waterer or feeder. This disease is serious and almost always leads to death. It is very important to take precautions against it to assure your chicks stay healthy.



### **Molting:**

Have you noticed feathers all over your chicken coop or lawn? Don't worry, this is normal! Chickens go through a process about once a year called molting. This is when a chicken will lose all of their feathers in a definite pattern. The specific order that molting goes in is: head, neck, breast, stern, thighs, wings, and tail feathers. Some chickens start this process earlier than 12 months and other chickens start later. The ones that begin molting before 12 months are usually not your best layers.

These chickens will most likely take 4 months, or more, every year to go through the whole molting process. During this time they will not produce eggs and will lose most of their feathers before their new ones grow back. Your better layers will usually be the ones who don't molt until after 12 months. These chickens can take as few as 2 months to go through the molting period and sometimes are even still capable of laying during this time. If they end up not laying through molting, they are still able to get back into consistent egg production quicker than the ones that begin the molting process before 12 months.

During Molting chickens can be easily stressed. Since this is such a difficult time for your chickens, you will need to do whatever you can to keep their stress level low. The chickens will have hormonal fluctuations along with increased energy requirements throughout this whole period of time. To help keep them content, try to make sure the temperature of the coop is at least 70 degrees, not any lower. Also make sure to still provide a quality diet. Even though your chickens may not be laying, they still need their nutrients. Changing their diet is taking a chance at causing them to have higher stress levels. One more thing that may help relieve stress is misting the chickens with water or at least putting out a pan for them to bathe in. The pan doesn't need to be big, just large enough for them to be able to get some water on them when they feel like they need it. Less stress should help the molting process go quick and smoothly.

**Have more questions?**

**Please feel free to contact us.....**

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