



# Poultrynz

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## Poultrynz Editorial

My how time flies and Christmas is nearly on us. It is now time that we can see how many Cockerels and Pullets we have hatched out. The theory is that you get more Cockerels in the early hatches than Pullets and vice-versa at the end of the season. I didn't really believe that but this year from my early hatchings I got eleven

Cockerels and one Pullet. The next twelve later chicks I see more Pullets than Cockerels. However I can understand that the theory could be right as Cockerels need more time to mature their final feathers than Pullets. But I'm sure this theory is one of those that can be proven wrong. Until next issue. Regards, Ian Selby

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# CHICKEN AND PUMPKIN MASH

## INGREDIENTS

Serves 4.

1600g pumpkin, peeled, seeded and chopped

1 tablespoon rice bran oil

800g skinned and boned chicken breast

salt and pepper to taste

½ cup medium-sweet white wine

1 small shallot, finely diced

4 black peppercorns

¾ cup cream

2 cloves garlic, crushed

50g butter

¼ cup chopped basil

pinch nutmeg

1 tablespoon pure maple syrup

## METHOD

- Preheat the oven to 200°C. Roast the pumpkin in half the oil until tender and soft, about 15 minutes.
- Season the chicken and seal it in the remaining oil in a frying pan. Oven-cook the chicken in a pan until the juices run clear (about 15 minutes).
- Boil the white wine, shallot and peppercorns until the sauce is reduced and thick. Strain and add the cream and garlic. Simmer until slightly thickened. Season and whisk in half the butter and the basil.
- Mash the pumpkin, season and add the remaining butter. Add the nutmeg and the maple syrup to taste.

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# RECHARGING BATTERY CHICKENS



by D.S.Green, UK

Battery Hens

It was the taste of a fried egg one lunchtime that made me acquiesce at last to my husband's long-held ambition to keep a few chickens in our large country garden. Or rather the realisation, as I chewed it, that the supermarket-bought egg tasted of absolutely nothing.

My husband favoured free range methods, but having just spent three years transforming a wilderness into a kitchen garden, I was reluctant. 'They prefer slugs to plants,' he was still saying some months later, rather unconvincingly as our new feathered residents were making a beeline for my tender broccoli seedlings.

However, before we could even consider inviting hens into our lives we had to prepare safe and comfortable housing for them.

## Safe as henhouses

We could, of course, have bought a ready-made  
4

wooden ark, for a hundred pounds or so, but we preferred to put to constructive use one of the small stone outhouses that was otherwise serving only as a dumping ground for flowerpots. We chose the one that seemed to have started life as a pigsty and my husband and father set to work to convert it into a hen-house.

A simple roof repair and chicken wire job turned into a major renovation. A completely new roof and mains electricity were installed, (so that artificial light would fool them into laying eggs throughout the winter), and the bottom of the run was sunk deep into concrete, to be fox-proof. The inside walls were rough plastered, to make them less receptive to parasites, but it took the joint efforts of my father and to restrain my husband from emulsifying it just to make it more homely for the hens.

'This isn't a henhouse, it's a luxury hotel!' remarked

a neighbour wryly. With the work finally completed, we thought it would be simple to acquire a few hens. After all, we lived in the country didn't we?

### First catch your chicken!

We visited the Domestic Fowl Trust at Evesham - a wonderful place, with hundreds of breeds and hens in all shapes and colours. Having taken several hours there to choose our favourites, we discovered that they would have to be hatched 'to order' and so we'd have a long wait for egg-laying hens. We'd also have to pay a great deal more than we could now afford, having rashly spent so much on the new henhouse!

Returning home in despair, we began to wonder whether pigs were not such a bad idea after all. Then I picked up the local paper and saw a small add that seemed too good to be true:

'Hens laying large brown eggs. £1.50.'

'There's a catch. They must be battery hens,' I cautioned my husband. He was not convinced. 'But this is the country' he protested. 'They're probably just nice people who keep chickens for love, not profit.'

I reserved my judgement, and reflected that at £1.50 apiece, a mistake would not be expensive.

We drove the next day to the farmhouse, which had outside a large sign detailing 'farm-fresh eggs' for sale. My heart sank, this was code for battery eggs, I remembered.

We parked in a yard edged by the farmhouse and a long dark shed. As soon as we stopped, we were aware of a constant clucking and cackling, emanating from the shed. A small door was the only entrance or source of light, and we stepped inside.

Four rows of small wire cages, stacked four high and back-to-back, crammed as many hens as possible into the space available. Rolls of polythene sheeting beneath each 'floor' of cages allowed the droppings to be rolled out without too much bother, while drainpipes along the front held water, a sparse ration of pelleted food, and eggs that had rolled out of the trap doors at the bottom of each cage. We seemed to have happened upon the hens in the midst of a riot, their featherless necks rubbing against the wire as they looked about them, clucking indignantly.

'I'm getting back in the car,' I said. I'd suddenly gone right off eggs. At that point, the lady of the house entered the yard, followed by a small cheerful Spaniel.

'We'll take six of them,' my husband told her firmly, whispering to me, 'I'd like to take them all.'

She put them in cardboard boxes tied with a single string. Knowing how mad our cats go in transit, I had visions of driving home in clouds of feathers as they made circuits of the car. To my surprise, we just heard

the odd confused cluck. When we got them home, we began to realise why.

### Oh, brave new poultry world!

We took the chickens out of the boxes and stood them in the henhouse. We stood back, expecting them to start exploring their new home. The chickens stood still. We picked one up and moved it to a different place. It stood still. It dawned on us slowly that they didn't know that there was any other option. They'd not been able to move about before, and so it did not occur to them as an option now. We were therefore amazed to discover that within five minutes one of them worked out that it was no longer bounded by a cage. Gingerly, it took a step forwards and, plucking up all its courage, pecked at the ground. Within a few minutes, the others began to follow suit. To see them become aware of their freedom was a great delight. For the first day and night we kept them in the henhouse. We thought this might seem stifling to them, but there was so much novelty for them. Sawdust to scratch in, a big plastic seed tray full of food, a washing up bowl full of drinking water, a tray of grit, all freely available, plus of course nestboxes and a perch, which they had never seen before.

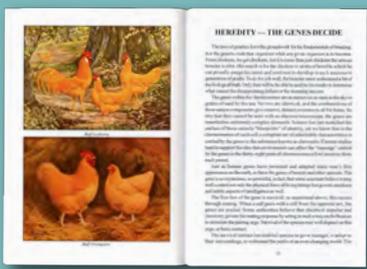
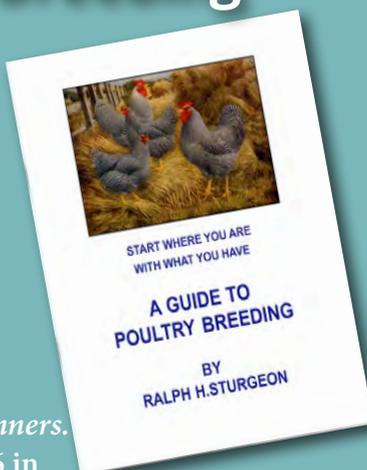
My husband decided to teach them to perch. He put them all in turn on the wooden perch he'd carefully

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Typical Commercial hens with trimmed beaks

fashioned. We waited. Then - thump, thump, thump, thump, thump, thump. In turn, they all fell off! However, the act of falling alerted their instincts to flap their wings, something else they hadn't been able to do before. Watching an ex-battery chicken stretch its wings for the first time is a sight full of vicarious bliss.

He also introduced them to the nestboxes, and our delight was unbounded at finding three large eggs there next day. We soon realised that the chickens preferred to sleep in the nestboxes rather than on the perch. They like to huddle together in them; perhaps preferring the security of the nestbox walls, to the exposure of the perch.

The next day we let them out into the fixed run. They were shy of the sunlight at first but didn't take much persuasion to emerge from the pophole. We fed them lots of weeds, especially dandelion leaves which they adored, but discovered that nettles, recommended by the books, were left untouched.

My husband had also made a movable run to allow them range on grass or soil. His excuse for getting chickens in the first place was to enable us to control our slug problem organically. We were pleased to see how thoroughly they dug over a plot of ground,

but we have yet to teach them to differentiate between our 'friends', such as worms, and our enemies, the slugs! We have even found a chicken with a frog in its beak, whereupon we gave the hen a lecture about frogs being their colleagues on slug patrol - not their dinner!

### **Putting a cat among the chickens**

We were anxious as to how the chickens would react to our cats. We were very conscious that our seasoned birdstalking cats, who have been known to steal drumsticks from neighbours' barbecues, might mistake the henhouse for their very own larder.

We need not have feared for the hens - the cats were the ones that needed rescuing! When the hens first took up residence, our two littlest cats, Mabel and Dolly, spent hours with their noses pressed against the wire of the run. They were fascinated by the jerky movements of the hens, who would occasionally acknowledge the cats' presence by pecking their noses through the wire.

When we allow the hens to free-range as a treat under our strict supervision, the cats follow them, but after the odd initial skirmish the chickens have established their superior status and they will chase the cats away if they get too close! It makes a refreshing change to see a big bird flapping down the garden in pursuit of a cat!

### **Earning their keep**

The hens are now producing an average of three eggs per day, and sometimes as many as five, which we are told is very good for yearlings. The eggs are large and a dark flesh colour, and some are so huge they will not fit into a standard size one egg box! We were very proud recently when a carefully selected half-dozen took a third prize in our annual village show.

We also benefit from their manure, which along with the sawdust from the henhouse, has topped up the compost heaps to capacity - the only problem being that we feed virtually all the weeds to them, so the green element of the compost heap has been reduced, other than nettles of which there are still plenty. Perhaps next year we will also be able to produce champion beans - a crop which apparently dotes on



Hyline Pullets used in Commercial Poultry Farms

chicken manure!

In return for this bounty, we provide, a handful of layers' pellets to each chicken per day, with a little oystershell to avoid soft-shelled eggs. We throw down a few handfuls of grain for them to scratch for and a lot of kitchen scraps. In colder weather we give them a dish of layers' mash, mixed with warm water to form a porridge. They also help us to take care of gluts of garden produce that we cannot preserve. We were delighted to find they even like the cucumbers that we had accidentally allowed to turn bitter on the plant.

Raiding the larder for special treats, not that they need them!, my husband will give them tinned corn, baked beans, tinned tomatoes and sultanas. Consequently, if they see him with a plate in his hand, they follow him anywhere, even the kitchen!, very handy for persuading them to return to their house after a free-range session.

The books are right when they say ten minutes care a day, plus half an hour to clean them out once a week, is sufficient but we spend a lot more time with them, because we find them soothing, entertaining and undemanding companions who soon take away the stresses of the day. They are also very popular with our friends. When we go away, we have no shortage of volunteers to look after them, especially when we say they can keep any eggs they find.

And what of the eggs' taste? Well of course, it's absolutely delicious!

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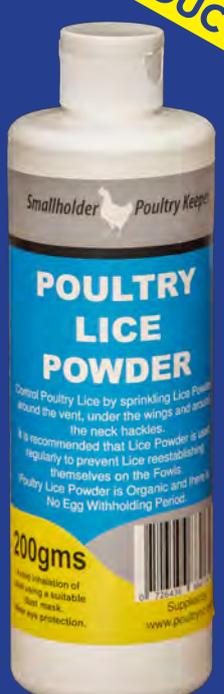
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# RAISING CHICKS



*Author unknown*

Bought-In chicks for rearing

Chicks are young birds from the newly hatched stage up to around the age of 5 weeks. It is a vulnerable time when care, protection and good management are essential. They will have been hatched by a broody hen, incubated in an incubator or purchased as day old stock from a specialist supplier. Whatever their source, their needs are the same - warm, protected conditions, food and water.

A broody hen provides warmth and protection, and the broody coop in which the eggs were hatched can easily be adapted to provide a continuing protected environment. Clean out the remains of egg shells and replace the litter with fresh wood shavings. Then attach a run to the coop, unless there is one already available, and provide a drinker and feeder in it. Poultry housing suppliers have a good range of coops and runs, or you can make your own.

Some poultry-keepers like to feed the hen and chicks separately because the fine, high protein chick crumbs

are more expensive than the hen's free range layer's ration. If chick crumbs are provided in the feeder, the hen will also help herself. One solution is to use a double coop. This is a run with a coop at either end, with one accessible only to the chicks because of the vertical slats preventing the hen's entry. The chick crumbs are provided in this coop and the small chicks can easily pass between the slats. The hen is fed outside and the coop at the other end is for the whole family to sleep in. There is no need to worry that the chicks in their coop will become separated from the hen. She has only to call them and they will come running to push their way under her ample feathers. If you have no great objection to the hen sharing the chick crumbs, they can be fed together. In fact one of the touching things about a broody is how she will pick up food and drop it on the ground for her chicks.

The coop and run will need to be moved frequently onto fresh ground to minimise the risk of diseases



Chicks Feeding

such as coccidiosis from a build-up of droppings. After the first two weeks it may be necessary to provide a larger exercise pen, or even to allow the family to free range if this is possible without risk of damage to the garden, or to the birds themselves from predators. These include cats, dogs and hawks as well as rats and cats. They will normally return to their quarters before dusk, unless the hen has taken them to a place she thinks preferable, such as the branch of a tree or in amongst the hay bales. If they are out and about, they do need an eye kept on them! From around 5 weeks onwards the chicks will be increasingly independent, and the hen in turn, will be losing interest in them.

#### **Incubated and bought in day old chicks**

In the absence of a broody hen, the chicks will need to be housed in an environment that reflects the care she would have given them. The easiest way of doing this is to suspend a radiant heat brooder lamp in a protected area inside.

The correct height is easily established: if the chicks huddle under the lamp in a tight mass, they are cold and it needs to be lowered. If they are hovering around the edge of the heat source, it is too hot, and the lamp should be raised. As they grow the lamp is gradually raised in order to harden them off, but the first three days are crucial and they must be kept warm to prevent chilling.

A shed, outhouse or hen house can be adapted for

brooding purposes, as long as it is totally rat-proof. Some kind of partitioning will be required to confine the chicks to the area where the lamp is situated, and to prevent them escaping when the door is open. Some manufacturers supply portable sectioned brooding rings to go with a suspended lamp. A thick layer of wood shavings makes a warm, cosy floor. A feeder for chick crumbs and a drinker are the only other requirements. A suspended drinker is preferable to a floor-standing one because there is less likelihood of droppings getting into the water.

After about a week or so, depending on the weather, they can be moved to an outside coop and run. If it is an insulated coop, it may be appropriate to leave them there, otherwise they can return to their indoor quarters for the night. Generally speaking, chicks which are exposed to cooler temperatures are quicker to feather, but the key thing is that they have warm conditions to return to whenever required, otherwise they become chilled, sometimes leading to fatalities.

A traditional way of brooding chicks without a hen is to use a hay box brooder. This is essentially a covered run with a highly insulated coop so that the body warmth of the chicks is not lost. The run is an outside one, moved to fresh ground each day. Hay bags were used as insulators, and some had paraffin lamps to provide initial heat, although there must have been a fire risk. Hot water bottles have also been used to good effect. They can also be constructed, possibly us-



Broody Hen with Chicks

ing polystyrene packaging as a modern equivalent of hay. One of the most successful outdoor brooders I made was an adapted rabbit hutch, with the sleeping compartment lined with aluminium cooking foil and polystyrene sheets! The main problem with outside brooders is ensuring sufficient warmth for the first three crucial days, without impeding ventilation.

### Feeding

Reference has been made to chick crumbs which provide the best start for young birds. They are also referred to as a starter ration and are high in protein. These should be made available on an ad-lib basis so that the chicks can help themselves when they feel like it. Most contain coccidiostats, antibiotic additives to counteract the disease coccidiosis, but there are specialist feed suppliers who formulate chick crumbs without them. Those who are not raising large numbers of birds intensively prefer to use these more natural feeds. It is worth remembering however, that there is a greater risk of coccidiosis if the chicks are on the ground outside. Even where runs are placed on areas where poultry have not been ranging, coccidiosis can still be introduced by wild birds. On balance, however, the natural feeds are preferable.

Traditionally, finely chopped hard boiled eggs were fed to chicks, along with finely ground cereals, and this was undoubtedly a good, high protein start, although "labour-intensive" in its application.

Those new to poultry-keeping may be concerned when incubator hatched chicks appear not to be eating. It should be remembered that the remains of the yolk

are still in their abdomens, and they are adequately fed for the first two days after emerging from the shell. This is why it is possible to transport day old chicks without needing to worry about feeding them en route. If there are still a few slow ones, imitate the mother hen by picking up some of the crumbs then drop them onto a sheet of paper on the ground. The sound and action stimulates tardy chicks into investigating. Similarly, pick them up gently and dip their beaks in water; they'll soon learn to drink!

Once the chicks are 5 weeks old they can be switched to a lower protein grower's ration. Again, it is

possible to get one without additives. Grain is also required at this time, as well as grit for its proper digestion.

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# FEED



Rooster feeding on Corn

by Mike Strecker. USA

A chicken, like all other creatures on this earth, is the result of what he eats. For example, if you fed a chicken nothing but scratch, then that bird would be loaded with gut fat. Why? Because corn and wheat are the grains that put fat into your fowl. I am not saying that these grains are not good for your birds, but they must be fed in the right proportions.

Pellets are the most important part of a chicken's diet. Pellets are what put the breast on a bird and pellets do not put gut fat on a chicken. Layer pellets are exactly what the name implies and that is that they contain just enough vitamins, minerals and nutrients for the commercial type laying hen to lay an egg with the smallest amount of money being spent. As small an amount as ½ cent a pound in feed costs, can mean a profit or loss for the man that is in the laying hen business for egg production. Now, layer pellets, as I said before, contain just enough nutrients for the hen to lay the egg but not enough for that egg to hatch.

A few years back, a lot of us in this area were having a hatchability problem, a hen would set on maybe a dozen eggs and only one or two would hatch. This was

happening not only to me, but to most breeders in this area. We were all buying layer pellets from the same place, thus we figured it must be something lacking in the feed. I contacted the nutritionist at the feed mill and he verified the fact that layer pellets do not contain enough vitamin B-12, pantothenic acid, and other vitamins necessary for proper hatchability of the eggs. He was very familiar with the type of chickens we raised and said he was not surprised that our eggs were not hatching because layer pellets are not made to give the embryo all the nutrients it needs to hatch, but he said that breeder pellets do. Breeder pellets are what the name implies, and that is they are made for breeding flocks and not laying flocks. Now I am sure that not many of you people reading this are raising your expensive show birds for eggs to sell at the corner market, if you are, you should go broke in no time!

Thus we see by the information above, that we must feed breeder pellets, they contain 20% protein and all the vitamins required for hatchability. If you cannot get breeder pellets in your area, then the same formula is marketed for game birds (pheasants, quail, etc.) and is called 'Gamebird Pellets.'

At this point, I will give you what I feel is the perfect feed ration for the type of chickens we raise: 50% breeder pellets, 20% scratch, 20% oats, 10% racing pigeon feed. To this add a small amount of calf mix and oyster shell grit.

Now a lot of you are saying that this type of feeding program is expensive, and I agree, but if you can't afford to feed right, then you have too many chickens, so cut down on the number of fowl, because as I said at the start of this article, a chicken is the result of what you feed them!

Oats are a very important part of a chicken's diet. If the oats were grown on the Pacific Coast, they contain 9% protein; if they were grown in the mid-west, they contain 11 % protein. I feed what is called re-cleaned whole oats, these are oats that still have the hulls on them. Oat groats are oats that have the hulls removed. These are more expensive and I don't feed oat groats because it has been proven that the oat hull or husk is beneficial in preventing cannibalism in young fowl and that the hulls improve feathering in the older fowl. Also, I do not soak my oats. I realize by saying this that I will get a lot of flack from a lot of people, because I know that many people soak oats and swear that they get beneficial results. However, about 90% of the people that contact me with diarrhoea problems in their fowl soak their oats until they ferment or sour.



Young Pullets feeding on Oyster Grit

Now if you think about it, the fermentation process is the result of a bacterial action and anything that is fermented is a perfect environment for bacteria or germs to grow. Thus, I feel if you are going to soak oats, don't soak them until they ferment. Also, to strengthen my point on not soaking oats, I will say that Ohio University did research on soaking or germinating oats and found that the results received did not justify the time and trouble spent on soaking oats.

As a closing thought, I would like to say that many people I talk to are under the misconception that you can get a hen to start laying eggs by feeding her lay pellets or egg formula. Nothing you feed a hen will start her laying eggs, the laying of an egg is determined by the length of day. In the spring, when the days get longer, then your hens will start laying. We have all driven past some commercial laying houses at night and observed that they still had the lights on, well that is not so the hen can see to eat, the lights are on because extended periods of light are what keep the hen laying. So if you want early chicks, you will have to put a light bulb in your brood pens and turn it on when it gets dark and leave it on for about four hours each night. In a week or so, that hen will start laying, but remember she needs the right diet for that egg to hatch!



Quality Poultry Pellets

# ROSECOMBS



From "Country Life" UK

The British Poultry Standards describe the Rosecomb as "a true bantam." Origin: Great Britain. There is little doubt that it is a true bantam in that it has not been 'bred small' from a large breed, but that its origin is purely British is open to some dispute. In the poultry literature of the 18th and 19th centuries, the Black Rosecomb is referred to as the Black African, with claims that unnamed native bantams had been crossed with foreign imports. In other parts of Europe, a bantam virtually indistinguishable from the Black Rosecomb was called the Java; indicating an origin somewhat remote from the shores of Britain.

However, an English breeder, Alfred Yates, claimed that his Black Rosecombs were descendants of stock kept by John Buckton, the owner of the Angel Inn at Grantham King Richard III, stay-

Older Fowls can also catch Coccidiosis

ing at the Inn noticed the little black hens with prominent combs and large white lobes and 'took a fancy to them.' He was presented with 30 birds in 1483, an action which inevitably made them popular with the gentry as well. The phrase 'Back to Buckton' was commonly used thereafter to emphasise the pedigree of Rosecomb stock. Other sources claim that the Black Rosecomb was unknown until the 18th century when they were developed from the Black Hamburgh.

## Varieties

Whatever the truth of the origin of the Rosecomb, it must remain hidden behind the curtain of time. What is known is that it exists in a large number of varieties although only three of these are recognised by the British Poultry Standards. These are Black, Blue and White.



Black Red Rosecomb Cockerel.

In the USA, the following varieties of Rosecomb are recognised: Barred, Birchen, Black, Black Breasted Red, Black Tailed Red, Blue, Blue-Red, Brown-Red, Buff Columbian, Columbian, Crele, Exchequer, Ginger Red, Golden Duckwing, Lemon Blue, Mile Fleur, Mottled, Porcelain, Quail, Red, Red Pyle, Silver Ducking, Splash, Wheaten and White.

In Europe, the Java (Rosecomb) is also found in a wide variety - 'all sorts of colours which we do not accept' according to H.Eason Smith, summing up the position of the British Poultry Standards,

#### Features

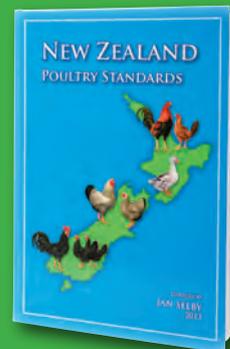
In appearance, the Rosecomb is a cobby little bird with a short, broad body, low set wings and high breast. The feature which gives it its name is the comb which, in good examples, is neat, long and tapering to a fine point. The earlobes are round and white, while the comb, face and wattles are bright red.

They are of little use as layers or broodies, although there is bound to be someone with Rosecombs whose experience is different.

Most people keep them as showbirds or because they just like having them around. When they do

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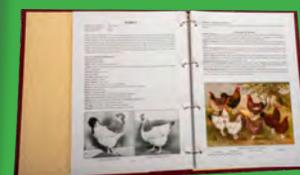
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Ringbinder 310 pages



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Blue Rosecomb Pullet

lay, the eggs are white or cream.

As Rosecombs get older, their faces tend to become whiter, so their chances of winning prizes diminish with age.

Some breeders report that the Males can be very aggressive, so care should be taken to keep them away from young children. Their great advantages, however, are that they don't require much space, they don't eat a great deal and they are very pretty.

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 a Merry Xmas  
 and a  
 Happy New Year  
 See you in 2026

# USING POULTRYNZ PRODUCTS

## POULTRY LICE POWDER

Control Poultry Lice by sprinkling Lice Powder around the vent, under the wings and around the neck hackles, repeat in 7 days.

It may be necessary to dose again for bad infestations. It is recommended that Lice Powder is used regularly to prevent Lice re-establishing themselves on the Fowls. Poultry Lice Powder is Organic.

The main ingredients are: Sodium Hydrogen Carbonate and Silicon dioxide. Avoid inhalation of dust using a suitable dust mask and wear eye protection. There is no egg-withholding period.



## APPLE CIDER VINEGAR (ACV) WITH GARLIC

Apple Cider Vinegar (ACV) offers several potential benefits for poultry, including improved digestion, boosted immunity, and better feather health.

ACV can also help control internal parasites and keep the drinking water fresher by inhibiting algae growth. There is no egg-withholding period.

**Here's a more detailed look at the benefits:**

**1. Improved Digestion:** ACV helps balance the pH levels in the chicken's gut, aiding in digestion. It can help break down minerals and proteins, making them easier

for chickens to absorb. ACV can also help cut through mucus in the gut, ensuring it's cleared out and eggs are clean.

**2. Garlic:** Contains 33 sulphur compounds, amino acids, germanium, calcium, copper, iron, potassium, magnesium, selenium, zinc & vitamins A, B1 & C.

**3. Enhanced Immune System:** ACV possesses natural antibacterial and antiviral properties that can help boost the chicken's immune system. It can help fight off harmful bacteria, including E.coli and salmonella. ACV can also help reduce the incidence of coccidiosis, a common intestinal parasite in chickens.

**4. Better Feather Condition:** Some poultry keepers report that ACV can contribute to shinier and healthier feathers.

**5. Other Potential Benefits:** ACV can help control internal parasites like worms. It can help keep the respiratory tract clear. ACV can help keep the drinking water fresher by inhibiting algae growth. Some studies suggest that ACV may even increase egg production, especially in hot weather.

**6. How to Use ACV with Poultry:** ACV can be added to chickens' drinking water, typically at a rate of 1 tablespoon per Litre. It's best to use raw, unpasteurised, unfiltered ACV with the "mother." You can also add small amounts of ACV to chicken feed to improve palatability. ACV can also be used to clean and disinfect chicken coops, waterers, and feeders.

