

SETTING UP BREEDING PENS

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To get the best results from your birds you must follow all basic health practices first.

- 1) Dust or spray birds to kill any lice they might have.
- 2) Clip their beaks and nails.
- 3) Completely clean pens they will be in & spray or dust floor and corners to kill any lice that may be around.
- 4) Clean their water bowls with soap & hot water.
- 5) Put in 2 inches of fresh shavings.
- 6) Wash out feeders and water containers with soap & water.
- 7) Keep water bowls away from manure & raised above floor to the height of your bird's back.
- 8) The feeders should be kept at the same height as the water bowls.
- 9) Provide fresh air to ventilate odor & moisture out of the coop.
- 10) Keep pens as clean as you can during the breeding season.

Feed and fresh water every day is important.

- 1) Water: Fresh clean water is always best. We can't always do it every day but try.
- 2) Water: Add electrolytes to the water once a week and let them drink it all.
- 3) Food: Breeder pellets are best for your birds during the season and can be fed year round. If you can't find them laying pellets will work fine.
- 4) Food: Scratch or supplemental treats are fine. Don't give too much, just for taming and reward. These are some of the things you can use in any combination to make the birds happy. Cracked corn (limit this because it can make them too fat) but they love it. Wheat, safflower seeds, black oil sunflower seeds. And for a real treat, just a little Gains Burger moist dog food.

Light is the key to the breeding process.

- 1) For both males & females the number of hours of light each day is what it takes to get yours hens to lay eggs and for the rooster to be fertile.
- 2) Fourteen hours is the magic amount of light each day that is needed.
- 3) A simple lamp timer is all it takes to get things going. Plug a lamp into the timer and begin to increase the number of hours a little at a time. One half hour each week beginning in February. Always add light to the

morning , remember the birds need to go to there perch by natural light so they wont be caught on the floor and chickens fill there crops before bed so they have enough energy to keep worm all night.

4) The light doesn't have to be real bright, just enough to get them up and eating.

5) Each day after December 21st the amount of day light increases, so by the end of February or before, you may begin to have eggs.

How much room do they need to be happy?

1) For standard chickens 2 square feet per bird is best. So a pen 2 feet by 4 feet is Fine, a trio could use 2 feet by 5 feet or so.

2) Bantams need less space, pairs or trio's can be happy with 2 feet by 3 feet.

3) Remember the pairs **HAVE TO BE SEPARATED** from all other breeds.

4) Roosts are good to give the birds exercise and a place to get away from each other.

5) The pens can be any shape but must have the proper square feet of space.

Eggs, and when they start to lay.

1) Nests are best if you have the room. It is easier to keep them clean so the Eggs you set are clean and don't have any poop on them.

2) Only pick the best eggs that you have for setting. Choose a clean shell that is strong not soft or cracked. Shape should be like a normal egg, not rough, wrinkled or eggs that look like long watermelons (*note*: some modern game hens lay eggs that are a little long, these are fine to set).

3) Collect eggs every day and don't let them freeze. Put them in egg cartons and mark the date with a (pencil only) so you can keep track of how old each egg is. Example (3/12/05) if you have more then one breed put the breed on the egg like (BC) Buff Cochin.

4) Store the eggs in a cool place around 50 or 60 degrees. **POINTED END DOWN**. Tip the carton slightly to one side. Each day tip the carton the opposite direction.

5) Collect eggs until you have at least 10, this should take around two weeks with one hen, a lot quicker with two hens.

6) The eggs are best used from 10 to 20 days, after that they don't hatch as