

# Keeping Chickens Newsletter

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[www.KeepingChickensNewsletter.com](http://www.KeepingChickensNewsletter.com)



January 2012  
Vol.1

Hi

Welcome to my Keeping Chickens Newsletter.

Thanks to everyone who has sent in their keeping chickens tips, stories and photos etc. - as usual, if you have anything chicken related (tips, photos, stories, questions, coops etc.) you'd like to share in future issues of the newsletter or blog posts then just email [news@self-sufficient-life.com](mailto:news@self-sufficient-life.com) and I will do my best to answer / include them.

Best Wishes

Gina

## Subscriber Letters



*Catherine* : My silkies finally laid- 2 eggs, then 2 days later, 1 egg, now a week with nothing. I installed a nice "spring time" light in the roosting area and am sure to keep them happily fed, fresh bedding and water and free range time. We are considering buying some new chicks that are more reliable layers. Any tips? And can you buy as little as 2 at a time? We are in Westchester Co. NY. Thanks Happy Holidays!

*My Reply* : *I'm not sure if it is possible to buy as few as two chicks at a time if they are being shipped because they keep each other warm on the journey so most hatcheries have a minimum number higher than that - and they often also give a few 'extras' (cockerels) for warmth. You may be able to buy only two chicks from a feed/pet/supplies store if they sell them – commonly stocked breeds in stores would probably be the egg laying hybrid breeds such as red / black sex-links. They are often hybrids derived from breeds such as Rhode island reds, Plymouth rocks and Wyandottes. Leghorns are also known to be good layers.*

*Royce* : Royce here from Granite Falls, WA. I have often read from folks inquiring about vet's and the lack of them for their chickens. Sandra in the most recent issue of your newsletter is spot on when she says that vets are often specialized in a certain area of practice. It would probably be helpful for your readers, especially those new to chickens, to know that when it comes to treating sick chickens and seeing a vet, it's simply a matter of economics. Most vets will charge \$40-100 just for the first visit. Most chickens can be bought for \$20 or less. There are very few folks who will spend \$50 or more on a bird that can be pretty easily replaced for \$20 or less. Ergo, you just don't find many vets who know anything about poultry.

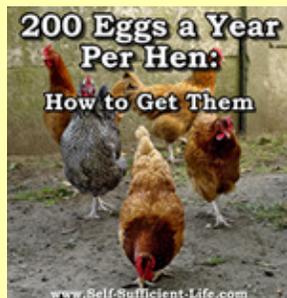
*Irene* : regarding the gentleman who's vet wouldn't look at his sick chicken, I thought you'd like to hear my experience. My hen had sour crop, though I didn't realise it at the time. I telephoned my vet and asked how much would a consultation for a hen be and this is what I was told. 'Its £25. We can't promise we'll know what's wrong with your hen as they're not our area of expertise'. Now I fully accept that vets can't possibly know about every animal, and that was part of the reason I rang them. What amazed me was that reading between the lines what they were actually saying to me was. 'We don't know anything about hens but bring her along and we'll gladly take your cash.' After some ringing around I've since changed my vet. My new vet charged £10 for the consultation, she was given a good check over, an injection and I was given tablets and something to put in the water for 7 days. The entire bill only came to £19 and he spent time on her. Unfortunately I feel that in these days there are some vets who are only in it for the money. Gone are the good old days when they cared about their patients and the owners. Irene



*Lida* : Hi Gina, Wanted to wish you a great holiday season. Here is a picture of our coop that our daughter decorated for Christmas. We have three hens, Mary Ann, Ginger and Mrs. Howell. We are the first in the neighborhood to have chickens and the neighbors with their children and grandchildren come over to see and pet them. We try to let them out every afternoon to roam the neighbor and explore and feed on the insects and grasses. Since its been warm here in Mass, the light that we installed in their coop has attracted moths and it is fun to watch them as they catch them in flight towards the light. We are still receiving 3 eggs a day even though the days are shorter...Keep up the good work with your newsletter as it always brings a smile to our faces!! Lida & Bruce Benoit. Raynham, MA



*Mark* : My beautiful lady (+her son Cody)..and I live on Mount Tambourine, QLD, AUST. It is 40km from the coast and 600m above sea level. It is a spectacular part of our planet and we love living here. I am a high school science teacher and Fleur owns the local fairy shop here. We bought a lovely house here two years ago and I built a chicken run. We have 5 white leghorns, 2 red leghorns, 2 Aracarnas, 1 isa brown and 5 "bond brown" pullets. I have come to love chickens sooo much that I have bought an incubator and am about to start brooding over 12 Black Australorps and 12 Barnvelders. Maybe I've gone chicken mad...everyone should have chooks..everywhere..I have attached a pic of our girls in our misty backyard..due to the proximity to the ocean and the elevation..we literally live in the clouds. Best wishes and thanks again. Mark n Fleur n Cody.....



## 200 Eggs a Year

Chicken Care Guide

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE DETAILS](#)



*Jim and Dolores Wyland* : We look forward to your newsletter and would like to let you know that instead of buying oyster shell for our 3 Bantam Wyandotte hens and 1 rooster I save the egg shells from their eggs and when I have accumulated a big metal bowl of them and they are dried I crush them with a rock and put them in their crumbles. We also feed them scratch and sunflower seeds out in their yard everyday.



They love their afternoon free range time in our garden and greet us at their yard door by talking to us knowing they will be let out. We give them crumbs of whole wheat bread and they appreciate it by talking to us. We love to watch them bask in the sun of a dry sandy place and wander through the woods around the house. Our dog a Jack Russell loves them too and keeps the predators away. She is white with some black and from far away looks like one of the chickens. They go to their coop when the sun is going down.



We have recently insulated their coop with heavy sheets of cardboard - nailed on with roofing nails. Do you have any suggestions for added warmth in the coop to keep the water from freezing? We tried a lamp down in a large metal bucket, on a timer, but the small amount of light at night, we felt, distressed them.

*My Reply : Another way to keep the water from freezing is to heat it from underneath. There are heated waterers for sold for poultry and heated dog water bowls are also often used in small flocks (apparently can be cheaper/easier to get hold of as they are often sold in places such as walmart). Obviously you have to be careful with outdoor electricity and water but it is quite a common home-made poultry item. Some people fit a bulb inside a wooden box, others under a ceramic plant pot or inside an old cookies tin etc. One subscriber in the January 2010 issue described how he makes his water heater here :*

<http://www.self-sufficient-life.com/Jan10kcnl/page09.htm>



*Minna* : Is it possible to have a chicken that never lays eggs? We've gone through the checklist of things that would cause a chicken to stop laying eggs and haven't been able to find a cause. She is a very healthy and happy chicken. Attached are a few pictures of our 1 year old silver laced wyandotte (born 9/2011). She did lay a few rubber eggs in the beginning but then stopped permanently. I'm starting to think some hens never lay eggs. What do you think? Though I should mention she was attacked by a juvenile mountain lion 4 months ago. At the time she was molting so the cat couldn't get a good hold. We were outside with the dog within seconds and was able to successful scare it away. She had only a minor scratch and missing a pile of feathers. She is a lucky chicken.

*My Reply* : *It is possible to have a chicken that won't lay eggs due to some issue with their internal workings - it may also be that some internal damage was done when she was attacked. Stress is one major cause of stopping laying and so the attack would certainly count as 'stress'. Nutrition, parasites, and illness can also affect egg laying.*



Sewing Project

## How To Make A Hen Saddle

Simple Sewing Project

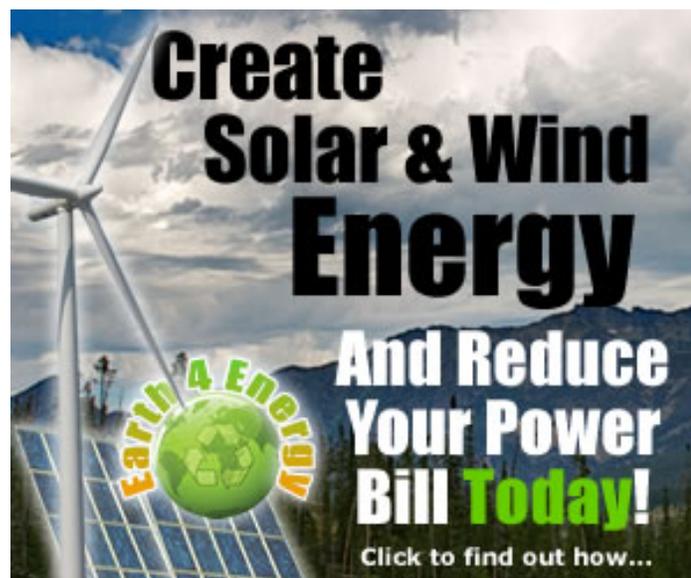
[CLICK HERE FOR MORE DETAILS](#)

*Judy* : Hi Gina Just finished reading your enjoyable newsletter. I can help the lady who wondered how the rooster knew when to start mating with a young hen. They go by the colour of the hens comb. When mature a hens comb is bright red, before that it's pink. So when a chicken is ready to start laying eggs her comb turns from pink to red and at that time the rooster will start mating with her. It's great to see how many people really enjoy their chickens. Judy from Ontario, Canada.

*Lin Harris* : I've been around horses all my life and have applied some stall-keeping habits with my 24 hens. I "pick" the manure about every other day, especially under the roosts. Their coop is bedded deep (about 8") with pine shavings and the perfect tool is a small rake and handled pan that's intended for removing dog droppings from the yard. Plus it's easy on my back. It's simple to dump each pan full into a muck bucket which I empty under the pine trees that love the acidity from the chicken litter. My coop never has an odor, the nesting boxes stay cleaner and a small amount of new shavings are required every 2-3 weeks.

*Julie* : Just wanted to share that my little pekin bantam MrsBuff, buff by name and buff by colour, was sitting on my shoulder for one hour preening whilst I did my email yesterday, surreal but lovely. All the best and happy new year to all the chicken lovers out there.

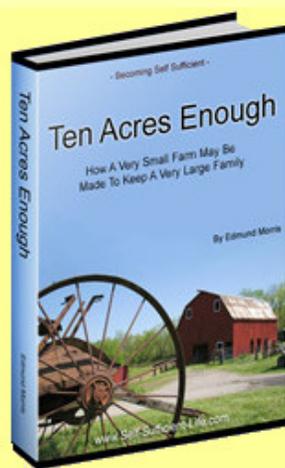
*Cindy* : In response to Cheska's chickens eating her eggs. We read (probably here) adding golf balls to their nests and more egg checks helps to break them from this bad habit. We tried it and it really worked. Thank you Gina for all you do!



*Jill* : I look forward to your wonderful, informative newsletter every month. This is our first try at chicken rearing, and we're doing much better than Nola .... way too funny !! Our 21 girls are New Hampshire's, Golden Comets and Araucanas. All are overly friendly, love sitting on our laps, come running for petting time and are producing about 18 eggs a day. We have one hen that has gone broody, now named Ms. Crabby, but we leave her alone now after trying to break her twice. She'll get over it sooner or later!! (Hopefully!! )



Here's some pics of the girls and some whopper eggs. We know that one little Comet is laying an extra, extra large size and really can't figure out how she does it!! Our girls are experiencing their first winter in Northern Wisconsin. The coop is fully insulated, well ventilated and they have a fenced outdoor run...but we found out they are not too fond of snowstorms! The girls are very smart, but haven't made any snowchickens yet!! Thanks for a great source of information, Jill & Mark Tomahawk,WI



## Ten Acres Enough

How A Very Small Farm May Be Made To  
Keep A Very Large Family

Ten Acres Enough is a self-sufficiency classic written by Edmund Morris, and is his personal story of his journey from city businessman to farmer. In this book Edmund details the first 3 years of his 'back to the land' experience and explains honestly what worked for him and what did not.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE DETAILS](#)

*Willie & Barbara Bell* : Gina attached are shots of a pullet puppy sitting 6 Great Pyreneese puppies, she has been with them since three days old. They are now 28 days old and was moved to a new location on the 28th December 2011.



This hen was attacked by guineas where the skin was peeled from her head. After caging her up for four days we let her out in the barn where the puppies was born. For some strange season the bitch did not go after her and she got closer and closer to the pups. At this point no other animal could go near this area, only the puppy sitter was allowed in the area. This gave the mother a well deserved break and she took advantage of it as she was always outside. She knew she had a credible sitter. The pullets food was in the cage where she would go to eat and drink.



When the both of them are away from the pups, she eating or drinking, the bitch outside resting, and the pups start to yap the hen would go to their aid or if we were to walk toward the stall when she is out she would rush ahead of us to protect the pups, the mother was off some where resting. See Attachments. From

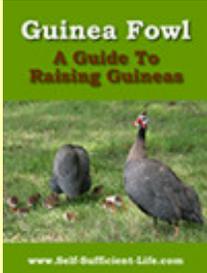
day 3 To day 28 Their eyes open fully at day 20 and they start to move around more, but she is still there with them even after moving them to a new location two days ago.



**Guinea Fowl**

A Guide To Raising Guineas

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE DETAILS](#)



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