

# Keeping Chickens Newsletter

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Vol.2

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

*Lynda* : I've just joined and already I'm loving reading all the wonderful stories from other members in your newsletters. I started keeping free range Gold Pencilled Hamburgs about 3 years ago quite by chance. It was my first time at keeping poultry and I had been looking to purchase Wyandottes but none were available. One of the breeders I contacted was getting out of breeding GP Hamburgs and she had 3 hens and one rooster to get rid of. I took them on, not knowing a thing about them. They are flighty but they are good layers of small white eggs. It turns out that I have grown to love my pretty little GP Hamburgs. The only drawback is they make poor mothers, so a broody bantam is necessary to get good hatchings of chickens.

As time went by, I gave my brother one of my hatchling roosters and he put it with GP hens from another breeder. Much to everyone's surprise last year my brother hatched a number of chickens that were cream or lemon coloured instead of gold. My brother has since given me one of his Lemon coloured roosters and I will put him in with some of my young hens. I'm thinking that the Cream coloured hatchings are the very rare Lemon Pencilled Hamburg mutation. Did this mutation come from the Red GP Rooster I originally gave my brother or from one of the hens he put with it? Could one of your readers please tell me how this mutation is usually passed down. Lynda in New Zealand.

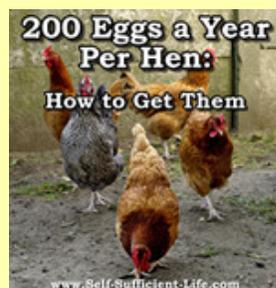
*Susan* : I thought I might offer some suggestions to Jess in Maine who loses her free range chickens to "critters". I also live in Maine, however, I have no predators on the little island where I live. But when I visit my mainland friends I always ask them what they do. One little farm that I know has few losses because of the donkey that won't let any critters in their pasture. I also wonder if your chickens roost up in the trees? A smaller breed of hen may also be helpful so they can really be up quite high.

*Rosina* : I recently brought some chicks. I don't know their exact age maybe about 50 days old and one of them went down on her stomach and her legs shook and she did not seem able to walk - just shuffle along flapping her wings like mad. She was eating fine and the other 2 kept her warm at night. I think it may have been a stroke, but my young neighbor said to me to crush some garlic into a small amount of water and force feed her this maybe every hour (2 cloves to 2-3 tbsp water) then if she is still alive crush small amounts of garlic into the coops water supply every water change (every day for me), and for me it worked since this she has made a full recovery. Don't know if this would work every time but for some peoples chicks it might be a case of life or death.

*Phil* : I have been reading your monthly publication for over a year now and I have applied many of the tricks added by readers. In the last release there was a question about how to keep more than one adult rooster. Well, I suppose that depends on when and how they came to be. I had 7 roosters in the first batch of chicks I ordered. All of them survived to adulthood. There were 3 Delaware roosters, 2 Brown Leghorns, 1 Australorp, 1 English Game Cock, and a Cornish Rooster. I added a Buff Brahma trio and a Speckled Hamburg trio after 6 weeks. I was somewhat heartlessly expecting nature to take its course but I did not lose any of the roosters! I lost the 2 Buff Brahma hens due to excessive hen pecking from the older hens despite my best efforts to acclimate them gradually.

Now, nearly 2 years later, and several broods from the hens, I have had several new roosters and hens added to the flock of nearly 30 chickens. The thing I have noticed is that there is a Rooster pecking order although when they do fight occasionally, they may draw a bit of blood, but it never is fatal. The roosters have gotten a bit more aggressive than they are supposed to be though from what I can tell. Normally Delaware roosters are relatively calm and friendly, but now if you don't watch your back when you go to feed them, they will attack from behind, and you will get spurred. Not too surprisingly, the English Game Cock is the feistiest of the bunch. He fights with everyone until they come after him then he runs away.

All was reasonably well until my wife was severely spurred by the little English game cock. I was obliged to put him down when I got home and when I did, the Alpha Delaware came after me spurs up and flapping. I already had my adrenaline up at that point and stepping out of the way of his rage, one more shot took him out as well. I say all of this to get to the point where if you have more than one rooster, you can probably get away with it for a while, but they will continue to escalate in aggressiveness to each other and to you if left alone. As difficult as it is to come to grips with, chicken makes for a good meal, and that's what extra roosters are for. If it is a pet, well then find it another home. If he is the only rooster chances are that he will settle down. Phil from Texas



## 200 Eggs a Year

Chicken Care Guide

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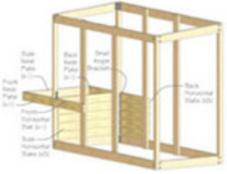


*Michelle* : Hi Gina, Love the newsletter! This is a reply to Jennifer about her Roosters. You really need to have at least 20 hens per rooster to keep them from trying to kill each other. We have 93 adult hens and 3 roosters. They chase each other, but that's as far as it goes. You can always tell that the old rooster is grumpy when you find the young roosters on the wrong side of the fence. All three are really good at their jobs and take protecting the flock seriously without being at all aggressive with humans. I do need to find homes for the 2 younger ones. They were both born May 1<sup>st</sup> last year. One is a Buff Orpington and the other is a Black Star (black sex link), both just beautiful. If anyone in Western Wisconsin/Minnesota needs a good rooster they are free to a good home. I've included pictures of the gorgeous boys and a couple of the girls. Thanks, Michelle





*Pat* : I thank you very much for your hard work and getting the news out to the chicken lovers. I thought I would send you a pic of our coop and run for our 5 fun hens (3 bantams and 2 mixed leghorns). I also attached a fun picture of their eggs. They are so pretty, it's hard to eat them, I want to just keep them all! Thanks again for the ongoing knowledge that you distribute. ...pat



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*Lorinda* : The first picture is from last summer when our granddaughters painted the new chicken coop. I just threw old tee shirts over their bathing suits and let the mess happen! In the second picture we had just introduced a rooster to our 15 Buff Orpingtons, and he was showing off a bit. The ladies are thrilled, and bicker over who gets to roost next to him at night. Hoping for some new little chicks this summer.



*Kristi* : I've enjoyed reading your newsletter and seeing the great stories, tips, and photos your readers share. I have a tragic story that I want to share with your readers in hopes that it doesn't happen to anyone else. My husband and I live in a suburban neighborhood in Nebraska and wanted to raise chickens. We love animals (we have two cats and a dog) and the idea of humanely raising chickens for eggs appealed to us. We bought six wonderful little chicks. We enjoyed watching them roam in the backyard during the afternoons. After a couple of months, their feathers were in, and they were ready to live outside full-time in their coop. My husband had researched coop plans and built a lovely one. The first night our chickens spent outside was chilly, so we turned on the heat lamp for them. Somehow, in the middle of the night, the clamp came loose, and the lamp fell and started a coop fire, which spread to the house. Sadly, our girls didn't make it.



Needless to say, we are devastated. We hope to someday try our hand at raising chickens again. If we do, we will definitely rig up a more secure hook for the heat lamp and perhaps use a lower wattage. Thanks again for letting me tell my story. Kristi Evans



## How To Make A Hen Saddle

Simple Sewing Project

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*Cath* : Love the newsletter. Thought I'd send you a photo of my little HUFFLEPUFF eyeing up the seedlings in the greenhouse. I'm sure if that door was open a bit more she'd be in there and there'd be no beans for dinner this summer !!!!!!! Cath Haywood

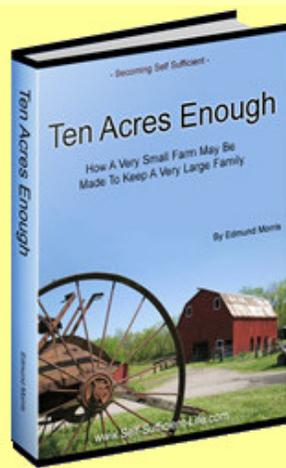


*Justin* : The photo is of my geese, chickens and one duck. The duck is the last one of 8 (they were taken by coyotes). I saved one duck and 5 geese. Now my duck has hatched 10 babies. Thank you Gina



*Jen* : Thank you Gina ... being on my first foray with chickens I am enjoying your work! Thought I would share our story just for kicks. I am 60, and care for my 93 yr old mother who was raised on a farm and then became a 'city girl'! We have six 4 day old RIR's in a brooder and they have been such great entertainment for me, her and the cat who is not at all aggressive but sits for hours outside the covered brooder and watches them.

Having fun with our new useful sustainable hobby. Jen and my mom Alberta, cat precious and Clara, Maureen, Mitzi, Lucy, Tina, and Reba !



## 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](#)



*Claudia & Pat* : Last Summer, we became caretakers of 5 Dominiques (1 Rooster and 4 Hens) that are across the street from our office in Pittsburgh, PA, USA. This is a picture of Henry. These 5 chickens came from the same clutch about 5 years ago. The chickens have filled out and seem to have become more social since their care has been consistent and interactive. We usually find 2 eggs every other day except in the Winter months. Since March, I have been candling the eggs but am not seeing any fertile eggs. We are looking for any possible explanation for not getting fertile eggs and any advice or suggestions for what we can try to get fertile eggs. We have to keep this breed pure so we can't just bring in a surrogate rooster. Thanks for the ideas.

*My Reply* : *Candling can only show if an egg is fertile once it has been under a broody hen (or in an incubator) for a few days and has started to develop. The only way (as far as I know) to see if an egg is fertilised without actually starting to incubate it is to crack it open and look at the yolk - a fertilised egg has a small white blob that looks like a donut, whilst in an unfertilised egg the blob is smaller and just a blob. If the rooster is doing his job regularly with all the girls then it is usually safe to assume that all the eggs have been fertilised.*

