

Keeping Chickens Newsletter

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www.KeepingChickensNewsletter.com



September 2011
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 and I will do my best to answer / include them.

Best Wishes

Gina

Subscriber Letters

Ruth : Hi Gina, Love the newsletter. I have a response to a lady that gives salads to her chickens, I do too, and wanted to know how else to serve it. She puts it on the ground. I save pie plates from pies that I buy and use them. It works well and they are free. I wanted to ask everyone what they put on the floor of their chicken houses? I live in Lake Tahoe, Nevada and we get alot of snow in the winter. I am building a 8x10 house for them. I'm putting linoleum on the floor but what to put on top of that, grass hay, pine shavings or??? Also, does anyone put stuff under the ladder where they sleep at night? I was thinking some kind of tray, maybe with sand in it for easy cleaning. Any ideas? Thanks, Ruth Blough

Kelie : Monique asked if anyone had an inexpensive way to keep chicken greens off the dirt. I keep an aluminum pie tin on my kitchen counter and toss in any leftovers the chickens can eat. The tins come from frozen pie shells that I use to make quiche from the wonderful eggs my hens lay. I add leftover pasta, rice, salad, sandwich crusts, corn cobs, soup noodles, you name it. Most of my food scraps go to the hens, the dog, or the compost pile, in that order. This cuts down on food waste that would otherwise go into a landfill. I put the tin of leftovers in the coop each morning and pick it up at night. The girls eat from the tin, but do scratch morsels out and into the dirt or run off with it so they don't have to share. The tins get a bit bent, but can be evened out, washed, and reused until they tear.

Ray : Hi I have built a new chook pen. It is on clay so when it rains it can get sloppy, so I have cut long weeds and placed about 50 mm thick over their run. Now when I throw on the veg scraps, no dirt. Also it makes the chooks scratch a lot as I throw some wheat among the weeds, good exercise. Ray, Western Australia

Pam : Thanks for your newsletter. I wanted to respond to Monique who needed something to feed her girls a lot of greens and didn't want to put them on the ground. We use a large plastic plant saucer to feed ours treats and greens. It's probably about 16" wide. Pam Rampmaier, Shreveport, LA.

Elaine : Like Monique, in the last newsletter, I give trimmings from the local market to my two girls I bought an old aluminium roaster from a secondhand store, and I use both top and bottom as feeders. The sides are about 2½inches high, so it makes it harder for the girls to drag the goodies out and drop them into the dirt. I try to give them an ear of fresh corn every day, at least through the summer. They love it, and they happily eat it in the roaster-container. The key is to make sure the sides are high, but not so high that the girls can't reach inside.



Carolyn : Thanks for all your work on this newsletter!

Included is a picture of our old coop (made from a bathroom vanity purchased at a Habitat for Humanity store).

Also included is a photo of our new coop (we realized the old one was too small for the water heater last winter, which made us work really hard to keep water from freezing!).

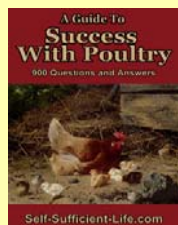
It's 4x4 with 2 nesting boxes, and a stained glass window from the Habitat store. This winter will be much more comfortable for the birds and us!



A question for you...one of our chickens has eggs sticking to her behind, then they get dropped at various places in the coop and yard. Any ideas why this happens?



My Reply : When eggs get stuck internally two possible causes for that are lack of calcium (calcium is required for muscle retraction) or dehydration where the part which moves around the egg as it is laid is too dry and stuck to it preventing it from getting out. I don't know for sure but I would imagine that one of those two things could also be responsible when the egg is almost out but getting stuck to your girls backside.



Success With Poultry

Practical Advice on Eggs, Feeding, Chicks,
Housing, Diseases, Incubators and Brooders,
Turkeys Ducks and Geese

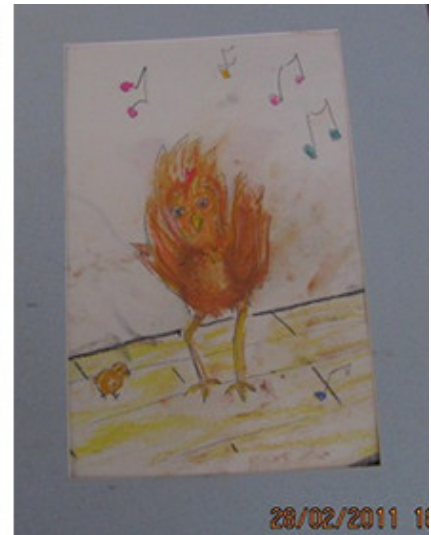
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Marja : Thank U for your lovely chicken newsletter.. I enjoyed all the comments and pictures of chickens. I have 6 golden comets and they are friendly and communicate with distinctive chirps to let me know when they want food, like watermelon and really want to roam freely in the yard..



I really like the sounds they make.. they are almost never angry.. and they are beginning to lay beautiful brown eggs.. how do they make such perfect eggs?? ☺



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Sandra : I just wanted to share my method of making hard boiled eggs that peel soooooo easily that you won't mind ever again making batches of deviled eggs!! If you are like me and have a "steamer" pan in your kitchen but never use it. You can now finally find a reason for keeping the thing. I put the steamer over a pan of boiling water and add my eggs to the steamer. You need to punch a small hole in the shell of each egg before steaming them. I give them about 10 minutes of steam time and then usually just set the pan off the burner so the eggs can cool. When you peel these eggs you will find that the shells practically fall off the eggs. Finally! Perfect hard boiled eggs that don't take half your day to try to peel. For all your readers out there who end up with extra eggs, this is a great way to use them. Keep a container of deviled eggs in your fridge and your family will end up snaking on those instead of grabbing something less healthy to calm their hunger pains.

Love the magazine and especially love the tips from everyone and the great pictures of other chicken keepers girls and the girls cottages. Keeps me in lots of great ideas. Thanks so much for your wonderful newsletter. Sincerely, Sandra Megyesi, Camden, Michigan

James Hinkle : Hi Gina, from the Texas Gulf Coast; Thought I would share some of my experiences with you. I have six hens that I keep in a portable coop made from an old dog kennel and some boat jacks. It works fairly well, though I need a wheel on the front yet. For now when ever my son drops by from college the two of us move it. I have been having problems with large Coyotes (they are bigger than my lab) grabbing chickens through the wire and pulling them underneath the coop. I put up an electric fence and so far it has been effective. I watch frequently from high ground with my rifle, but haven't seen them when I am armed.



I have been letting the hens free range during the day when I am home. The other day when I was out in the barn I heard one of the hens give an alert, so I checked it out. She was in the weeds standing very alert when suddenly she jumped and in a panic came running to me and the dog, right behind her was a three foot long brown snake moving fast. I carry a little pocket pistol around the house, and with a quick draw that make Roy Rodgers proud I dispatched the viper with a quick shot to the head. It stopped immediately, stone cold dead. Lucky shot! Shortly after I collected eggs - It looked like that scared hen layed four eggs, though I suspect she had some help. I would not want to use this little pistol on a large rattle snake, because the effective range with rat shot is about four feet, the same range as the larger snakes. Plan, B, get a hoe or shovel with a long handle.

Yesterday evening I noticed one of the hens standing still and all fluffed up by the out door fire place. I went to her and her head and neck were badly swollen, no doubt a copper head bite. She didn't want to move so I picked her up and put her in the chicken house. She got on the roost and just rocked back and forth like she was drunk with her eyes closed, then when the other hens came to roost I

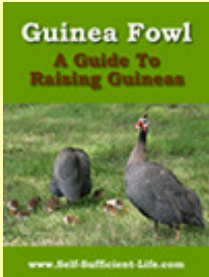
noticed a second hen with a fat head though not as bad. They made it through the night and couldn't wait to get out in the pasture the next morning.



Googled snake bite chicken to see if there was any info on how well chickens tolerate snake bite. There wasn't anything of value, but I did see where the Chinese have a delicacy that is prepared by having a chicken killed by a venomous snake.(sick)

Stray dogs that people have dumped are the most dangerous problem and can completely wipe you out.

I also have five free range Guineas that were on a national TV Reality show with David Hasselhoff last month. They are lots of fun and seem to be Coyote proof so far. Thank you, James Hinkle.



Guinea Fowl
A Guide To Raising Guineas
www.Self-Sufficient-Life.com

Guinea Fowl

A Guide To Raising Guineas

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Jane : Hi Gina I am worried about my chicken Dathy she is losing her feathers and has stopped laying !! She used to lay nearly every day now we have not had an egg for 4 weeks. She is eating well and no signs of being broody.



Also can you tell me how often pekings get broody - my little brown is broody nearly all the time. She went 60 days the first time till I took her away from the group for a couple off days then she was ok when 2 wks later she was sitting on an egg as soon as she got the chance. Anyone got any tips for my broody lady and poor Dathy who is molting. Thanks Jane Shotley

My Reply : *Some breeds are naturally more broody than others but even within a certain breed there can be individuals who will be more broody than the other*

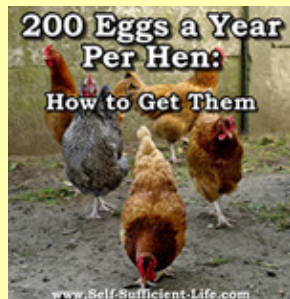
members of the flock and it sounds as though your little brown is one of those. There are some general tips to help stop a broody on the blog here :

<http://successwithpoultry.blogspot.com/2009/06/how-to-stop-broody-hen-from-staying.html>

If you can't stop her being broody, but also don't want chicks then another option may be to rehome her with someone who does particularly want a broody hen to hatch their own eggs. With Dathy currently molting that is likely to be the reason for the lack of eggs from her. A poultry vitamin/nutrient supplement (or perhaps something like a regular treat of black oil sunflower seeds) may help give her a little boost whilst she is using her resources to regrow feathers which might help speed things up a little.



Tina : I don't know if any readers can help and tell me what breed of chicken I have? The reason I do not know the breed is that my cat caught it as a very young chick, which we saved, and nursed it back to health. We have now had the chicken for four months now. I was hoping that it was a hen but sadly he is a cockerel! He rules our garden by pecking us. We only have him on his own at the mo, but I am thinking about getting him a companion.



200 Eggs a Year

Chicken Care Guide

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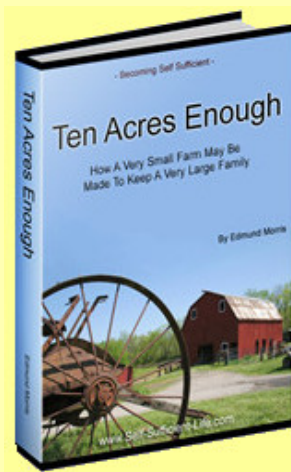


Felicia : The new chick has sprouted feathers and noticed the outside world. Am keeping him in until he's bigger or I am there to guard him. Thanks for all your help. Hoping all is well with you. Felicia





Photo By Bob Owen



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.

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