



Winter Chicken Care

This will be a helpful guide to prepare your flock for the winter months.

With fall and winter just around the corner, you may be wondering on how to manage your flock given the colder weather. Our team here at Pittsboro Feed has many helpful answers!

Chicken Care Considerations

Daylight	Hens need 16 hours of light for optimal laying.
	As days get shorter, put a light on a timer to get 16 hour of light including natural daylight.
	A low intensity 25 watt bulb or equivalent CFL or LED is all you need.
	Do not keep light on for 24 hours straight.
Water	Hens need constant access to fresh water
	Use a heated waterer because your water may freeze.
	Hens will not eat if they do not have a source of fresh water and may go into an early molt.
Molting	Molting is a natural process where hens stop laying and grow new feathers.
	Hens come out of a molt with a refreshed reproductive tract to begin laying eggs again.
	Switching to either Nutrena Feather Fixer or Purina Flock Raiser (non-organic) or Purina Organic Starter-Grower and adding supplemental oyster shell for 6 weeks may help hens recover and begin laying more quickly.

Frequently Asked Questions

My flock seems to be eating more than before. Is this normal? Yes! Chickens tend to eat more to keep up their body temperatures in the colder weather. Expect to see an increase in their feed consumption along with more waste production.

What do I need to do to prepare my coop for the colder weather?

- Close the doors and windows, but leave vents partially open for air flow.
- The coop does not need to be heated; however, some insulation will help retain heat.
- Check your coop for condensation which could indicate poor ventilation.
- Bedding should be turned or changed frequently as hens tend to produce more waste in the winter months.

What breed are best for colder climates?

- Ameraucanas
- Barred Rocks
- Buff Orpington
- Rhode Island Red
- ... and many others! Come in and ask for more recommendations.

How do I tell if my hen is molting or being picked on?

- Molting birds will lose feathers all over causing a disheveled or “bad hair day” look.
- A picked on bird will be missing a patch of feathers in one area due to aggression from other birds.

How can I reduce picking in my flock?

- Provide more space
- Improve ventilation
- Provide treats (Purina Flock Block is a great choice) or small handfuls of hay for hens to peck
- Create a barrier so less dominant hens can hide from more dominant birds

Have any other questions or problems that aren't covered here? Come see us and we will help you out!