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The Place Where Animal Lovers Come Together | Fall 2008

Featured Story

“Raising chickens is my passion, so I like knowing that I’m using a good feed from a respected company.”
 - Patrice Chandler, Layena® feeder

THIS QUARTER’S



flock tips:

Getting Your Ducks in a Row Before Winter



Product Spotlight

Featured Story | She bought her first chicks on a whim...



...but now raising chickens is her passion.

If her cousin hadn’t owned a feed store, Patrice Chandler might never have discovered her passion for raising chickens. After moving to Mississippi 18 years ago, Chandler paid a visit to her cousin’s store where some baby chicks had just arrived.

“I saw them and thought I’d give it a try,” recalls Chandler. Before long, she was hooked. “The first time one of my hens laid an egg, I knew I was doing something right.”

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Getting Your Ducks in a Row Before Winter

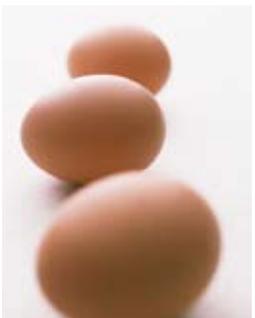
Shorter days and colder nights are just around the corner. No matter what type of poultry you’re raising, the steps you take now can help you maintain egg production and save you from a mad “scramble” when the thermometer dips.



- **Supplemental Lighting.** Shorter days trigger molting. Molting results in more energy devoted to growing feathers and less energy devoted to egg production. So one of the best ways to maintain egg production is to prevent a sudden molt. You can do this by providing supplemental lighting, extending the “daylight” hours to 14 to 16 hours per day. A single 60 to 100 watt bulb set on a timer will suffice. It’s best to extend the hours at the beginning of the day, so set the timer to turn the lights on before dawn. By employing this technique, any molt will be gradual and will not hinder egg production.



- **Egg Gathering.** The more your birds are confined during cold weather, the more frequently you should gather eggs. This will prevent other birds from pecking and breaking the eggs.



- **Ventilation.** While it’s important to weatherproof your coop to protect birds from the increasingly cold temperatures, you must still allow for adequate ventilation to help keep the litter dry. Otherwise, in such a confined area, ammonia can build up quickly. The hazards of ammonia can range from infection, to birth defects, to blindness. A simple way to test ammonia levels is to position your head at the same height as those of your birds’. Breathe normally. If, after a few seconds, your throat or eyes begin to burn, you have ammonia build up. Ventilation will reduce the moisture in your litter, which will help eliminate the ammonia.

- **Water.** If birds do not have water, they will not eat. If birds do not eat, they will not produce eggs. Make sure feeders and waterers are set up to function during freezing temperatures. Your birds need access to fresh, clean water at all times, day or night, and it’s always easier to install a heated waterer on a crisp, autumn day than in the middle of a cold, dark, winter night.

- **High-Quality Feed.** Last but not least, during the cold weather months, it’s important to offer a high-quality complete feed instead of “scratch” alone. Purina Mills® Layena® SunFresh® Recipe is all natural and contains sufficient protein, vitamins, minerals—and even a touch of marigold extract—to produce hearty, golden-yoked eggs. And birds love the taste.

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Get to Know Purina Mills® Layena® SunFresh® Recipe



- **Natural plant proteins** for safe and happy birds (no animal proteins or fats)
- **Superior nutrition** for great appearance and healthy eggs
- **Essential amino acids** for strong healthy birds with lots of eggs
- **Exclusive level of marigold extract** for rich yellow yolks
- **Key levels of calcium and manganese** for strong shells with fewer cracks
- **Proprietary level of Vitamin E** supports a healthy immune system
- **Certified Natural** - your assurance of quality. Nutrition that you can trust.

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Raising Chickens - continued

Today Chandler owns seven roosters and 13 hens on her 35-acre farm in Ruleville, MS. She recently built a new, state-of-the-art hen house, or rather, her husband Frankie built it to her precise specifications. “I’ve learned over the years what doesn’t work, so I was pretty demanding,” she confesses.

She takes pride in the fact that she’s the first person to be permitted to sell fresh eggs at her local farmer’s market. She follows rigid requirements, including bringing the eggs to market in a cooler filled with ice and equipped with a thermometer.

Her sales are so successful that sometimes she runs out of eggs for herself. “Occasionally, I have to wait to make cornbread until one of my hens lays an egg,” she laughs.

Another source of pride for Chandler is her students at Cleveland Mississippi Career Center. As a registered nurse, she teaches a class that encompasses all of the careers in healthcare, including animal health. She’s also teaching classes about the nutritional aspects of poultry (meat and eggs) and the physiology of egg formation in the hen. She recently ordered 25 chicks for her students to observe and is using the Purina Mills website as an educational resource.

Chandler is very particular about what she feeds her chickens. She says it was the illustration on the Purina Mills® Layena® SunFresh® Recipe bag that initially caught her eye, but it was the ingredients that sold her on the feed. She was impressed that Layena® SunFresh® Recipe is all-natural with no animal by-products and that the ingredients are very



clearly spelled out on the bag.

“Raising chickens is my passion, so I like knowing that I’m using a good feed from a respected company,” says Chandler. “I want to have healthy chickens, and I want to produce high-quality, good-tasting eggs for my customers. I like how the marigold extract in Layena® gives the yolks a deep yellow color.” Plus, her chickens enjoy eating it.

“I’ve noticed that my chickens eat more eagerly since I’ve switched to Layena®,” Chandler says. “And, maybe it’s my imagination, but I think their feathers have a luster that they never had before.” She also recommended Layena® SunFresh® Recipe to a friend, and he insists his hens are laying more.

“I just want my chickens to be the best,” says Chandler.

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