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An All-Pullet Flock for More Profit

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Cooperative Extension Service



For More Profit An All-Pullet Flock

The All-Pullet Laying Flock

1. Pullets Lay More Eggs Than Hens.
2. Pullets Eat Less Feed Than Hens.
3. Pullets Lay Eggs With Higher Interior Quality.
4. Pullets Lay Eggs With Stronger Shells.
5. You Can Raise A Pullet On About The Same Amount Of Feed That It Takes To Carry A Hen Through A Molt.

An all-pullet flock is made up of birds that are less than 1 year old when the production year starts.

The depreciation cost on the pullet flock usually amounts to between 6c and 8c per dozen eggs depending on the cost of producing the pullets, the rate of production, and the length of the production year.

Some flockowners are able to lengthen the laying year by putting the hens in temporary quarters for 2 to 4 months after the pullet flock is housed. This practice is likely to be more practical than holding the hens over for another full season of production.

Here are five advantages for pullets that you as a flockowner should consider when planning next years poultry project.

1. Pullets Are Capable of Laying 20% to 40% More Eggs Than Hens Will Lay During Their Second Year of Production

Pullets will normally lay for 14 to 16 months before production ceases and they start the annual molt. It usually takes from 10 to 12 weeks for a layer to go through the molt. During this time, the birds will use the high protein feed to grow feathers instead of producing eggs.

2. Pullets Require Less Feed to Produce a Dozen Eggs

Pullets lay at a higher rate than hens. A higher rate of production will return more eggs per bag of feed.

The body size of pullets is smaller than that of hens, thus it takes less feed for body maintenance.

Well bred pullets lay a large percent of eggs that meet the desired weight of 24 ounces per dozen. Old hen eggs will weigh as much as 2 ounces per dozen more. The smaller eggs can be produced with less feed.

3. Pullets Lay Eggs with Higher Interior Quality

Pullets will lay eggs that contain a high percent of thick white compared to thin white. This is the important factor that determines high interior quality in eggs.

4. Pullets Lay Eggs with Stronger Shells

Layers will put thicker, stronger shells on the eggs during the first year of production. Old hens in the second year of production will often lay eggs with shell defects such as thin areas, calcium deposits, and wrinkles.

After the birds have been in production several months the interior and exterior quality of the eggs will lower to the point that it will be noticed when the eggs are graded. Many of the quality controlled egg production programs require the hens to be re-

moved from the program after they are 18 to 20 months of age, because of the larger number of low quality eggs they will normally produce.

5. A Pullet Can Be Fed to Laying Age on About the Same Amount of Feed That is Required to Feed a Hen Through a Normal Molt

It takes about 20 pounds of feed to raise a pullet to laying age. It will take this same amount of feed to carry an old hen during the 10 to 12 weeks while she is molting. An old hen will lay few if any eggs during the time she is molting.

HOW TO MAKE THE ALL PULLET FLOCK LIVE AND LAY

Sell the old hens or move them to temporary quarters when the pullets are 5 months of age.

Clean and then disinfect the laying house by spraying walls, ceiling, and floor to rid the house of infectious disease organisms left over from the previous flock.

House the pullets and confine them during the entire laying year.

Allow 1 to 2 square feet of floor space depending on the type of housing provided. Use some of the range feeding and water equipment in the laying house until the new brood is familiar with new equipment.

Feed layers a balanced laying ration. Provide at least two to three eight-foot feeders or four to five hanging tube type feeders per 100 birds. Automatic feeders may be considered if the laying flock size is larger than 1,000 birds.

An automatic water supply is a labor saver. Place water near the feed in all areas of the house. A bird should not have to walk more than 10 to 12 feet between the feed and water in any area of the house.

By Boyd J. Bonzer and Clayton Sloat, Extension Poultrymen

Pullets lay 20 to 40% more eggs than hens