



# Basic Considerations for Managing Ready-To-Lay Pullets

**PEN:** Clean thoroughly and disinfect before fresh litter and equipment are brought in. Spread chopped straw or shavings 4" deep. Keep litter loose and dry. Remove wet litter around drinkers daily.

**FLOOR SPACE:** Allow 2 square feet per bird.

**DRINKERS:** Provide one automatic drinker per 100 birds. Clean drinkers daily to avoid contamination.

**FEEDERS:** Figure on one hanging-type feeder per 20 birds, or enough trough space for more than half the birds to eat at one time.

**FEED:** A balanced laying ration (16 to 18% protein) from your feed supplier will maintain proper nutrient levels and provide for a healthy, efficient laying hen. Feeding scratch or table scraps can cause an imbalance of nutrients, and may reduce egg production.

**LIGHT:** To ensure maximum production, a hen requires 14 to 16 hours of light every day to stimulate hormones that regulate the laying cycle. Never decrease the hours of light on a laying hen. Pullets purchased ready-to-lay have been on 12 hours of light. You **MUST INCREASE** light ½ to 1 hour per week until you reach 14 to 16 hours per day.

**NESTS:** One nest box (12" x 12" x 12") for every 4 to 5 hens should be sufficient. Keep nest full of clean straw or shavings. Gather eggs often to avoid egg breakage.

**VENTILATION:** Hens require fresh air to keep ammonia and humidity under control. Avoid cold drafts directly on the birds.

**FEATHER PICKING:** All ready-to-lay pullets are infrared beak treated at day old. Feather picking can have a number of causes. See Touble Shooting Pecking and Cannibalism.

Laying hens should reach approximately 50% production by about 23 weeks of age (depending on breed and growing conditions). With proper management, they will produce efficiently and profitably for one full year.

Designer eggs, Enhanced eggs, Omega 3 eggs... are you wondering whether your "classic" (original) eggs are good enough? Don't worry, you can have the benefits of these higher-priced eggs too. Just pick up some flax seeds at your local health store, and instead of giving the flax to your layers, grind it and eat it yourself. You'll get the health benefits of the "premium eggs" for a lot less money!