



Keeping Laying Hens

THINGS EVERY LAYER OWNER SHOULD KNOW

Healthy laying hens go through natural changes throughout the year. This guide helps you recognize what's normal, know when to take a closer look, and care for your flock with confidence.

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH MY HENS?



1

WHY AREN'T MY HENS LAYING?

Most likely causes:

- Seasonal changes (shorter days)
- Molting
- Heat stress
- Stress or changes in routine
- Nutrition
- Broodiness
- Age

Next steps:

Review nutrition, water, daylight, and any recent flock or routine changes. Be patient—hens often return to laying once conditions improve.



2

WHY DO MY EGGS LOOK DIFFERENT?

Most likely causes:

- Calcium or nutrition imbalance
- Stress or sudden changes
- Age (new layers may lay unusual eggs)
- Occasional odd eggs are normal

Next steps:

One unusual egg is usually not cause for concern. Review nutrition first, then monitor whether shell quality improves over the next several eggs.



3

WHY ARE MY HENS LOSING FEATHERS?

Most likely causes:

- Seasonal molt (normal)
- Age
- Over-mating by roosters
- Parasites or bullying (less common)

Next steps:

Seasonal molting helps hens replace worn feathers with healthy new plumage. Continue feeding a complete layer ration and avoid unnecessary handling while new feathers grow.



4

WHY ARE MY HENS EATING LESS?

Most likely causes:

- Heat stress
- Stress or environmental changes
- Stale or spoiled feed
- Illness (if severe or lasting)

Next steps:

Check feed freshness and water availability. Make sure they have shade and good ventilation. If appetite stays low, watch for other signs of illness.



5

SHOULD I BE CONCERNED?

Most likely causes:

Some changes are part of normal flock management, while others deserve a closer look.

Next steps:

Use the guide below to decide when to monitor, manage, or contact a poultry veterinarian.

USUALLY NORMAL



Reduced egg production during molt.
Hens redirect energy to feather regrowth.



Laying fewer eggs during shorter days.
Daylight changes signal hens to lay less.



An occasional unusual egg.
One odd egg is rarely a problem.



Broody behavior.
Hens pause laying while sitting on eggs.



Eating or drinking more in hot weather.
Heat stress changes normal habits.



Young hens laying unevenly.
It can take time for laying to steady.

**One unusual occurrence is usually not a problem.
Look for patterns, not perfection.**

WORTH A CLOSER LOOK



Multiple hens suddenly stop laying.
Look for issues with nutrition, environment, stress, or illness.



Loss of appetite.
May be an early sign of illness or heat stress.



Lethargy or reduced activity.
Signs that your hen may need veterinary care.



Repeated shell problems (thin, soft, rough, or misshapen).
Look for nutrition, hydration, stress, or underlying illness.



Difficulty laying or egg binding.
A serious condition that requires prompt attention.



Lash egg.
Often linked to an underlying reproductive tract issue.

**Contact a poultry veterinarian if you see any of the
signs above or if you're unsure.**

BEFORE YOU WORRY...

When something changes, ask yourself:

- Has the weather changed?
- Has daylight changed?
- Did I change feeds or treats?
- Has anything changed in the flock?
- Did I move the coop or run?

Small changes can lead to big differences in laying.

HEALTHY HEN CHECKLIST

Healthy hens are active, alert, and engaged.



Eating well



Dust bathing



Drinking well



Roosting normally



Bright eyes



Normal droppings



Active & curious



Good feather condition

Daily observation is one of the best ways to spot changes early.



RESOURCES & HELP

Want to learn more?

Scan the QR code to explore more layer care guides, articles, and feeding resources.



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