

You're Taking Home Organically-Raised Heritage-Breed Chickens!!!

Up until now, these birds have been raised organically, humanely, naturally, and respectfully – it is now up to you to continue this good thing!

Safe Home:

During the day, the birds need a safe space to range. They will want access to greens, bugs, sun, water, dirt for bathing in and scratching in, and their good-quality feed. This space must be safe from neighborhood dogs and hawks. Birds will also want access to an enclosed spot for nesting and laying eggs. The younger the bird, the more vulnerable they are. Chicks will need to be kept in a brooder inside the house. Your 'teenage' pullets and cockerels can be outside during sunny days, but will need to be protected from rain, and covered at all times from hawks and even crows. The teenagers are not smart about predators and may do silly things, like wandering, so they will need special attention.

At nighttime, the birds must have a safe place to go into, safe from raccoons, coyotes, weasels, rodents, etc. This nighttime coop must have roosts for sleeping on. And the birds must have access to this place during the day. For the first 2 or 3 weeks, it would be wise to keep the birds "cooped up" in this safe coop so they get used to that being 'home-base' at nighttime. After a couple weeks, they will automatically gather back inside at night on their roosts after ranging during the day.

Feed:

Our two favorite feeds

- 1) Nature's Best Layer Pellets - Mike from Benny's Feed Barn in Bedford Hills, NY | 914-424-1129 – can deliver this feed to Warwick on a monthly basis for \$30 a trip.
- 2) You can also get a great feed made by Cold Springs Farm in Sharon Springs, NY. You can pick this up at Heritage Feed & Supply, 2812 Route 17K, Bullville NY 10915 | 845-361-4081. Or they will also deliver to Warwick.

If you can't order or ride up to Bullville, you can go to the Warwick Valley Feed & Grain – ask them to order the Blue Seal certified organic chicken feed – crumbles for chicks and layer pellets for adult hens.

Organic Feed is pricier than the non-organic, but it is worth the money. You're putting a lot of work and effort into raising your own birds, you should eat the best, purist, healthiest eggs ever. Don't skimp on quality feed. Non-organic feed is made up mostly of soy, and being non-organic, means that is probably genetically modified soy. Also, less reputable companies raise protein levels using stuff like melamine, and the melamine is now proven to show up in the eggs. There are also dewormers, chemicals, fungicides, etc. added to non-organic feeds. You want purity and grace with layer feed – stick with organic feed. We are so lucky to have organic options for feed in this area!

Other things to have on hand:

- ◆ Waterers and Feeders – you can purchase these at the Tractor Supply Company or your local Fed & Grain store.
- ◆ Water Heater for the winter so their water doesn't freeze with the ability to plug it in to an electrical outlet.
- ◆ Pine Shavings as bedding/compost on the floor of your coop, and in the nest boxes to pad eggs and provide comfort in nesting
- ◆ Dried Elecampane root for tea, in case of a cold. I give the birds this tea if they are exposed to any wet cold day to prevent colds. Just put the tea into their waterer – they will drink it with no problems.
- ◆ Clove and Eucalyptus powder for dusting nest boxes to prevent mites.

Other supplements of note:

- ◆ Organic Alfalfa pellets in winter to replace greens
- ◆ Cayenne Pepper Powder – can be added to feed to keep rodents out and to provide nutrients
- ◆ Kelp Powder or Carob Powder – is nice supplement for extra minerals
- ◆ Kitchen and Garden Scraps, when appropriate. Egg shells can be crushed up and fed back to the birds.
- ◆ Mustard Greens, Onion, Garlic – nice cleansing greens – good against bronchial infections, worms, really strengthening and cleansing
- ◆ Oyster Shell – not really necessary for pasture-raised birds that are fed the feeds we mentioned above, and can have heavy metal issues so best avoided.
- ◆ Granite Grit – can be helpful in digestion, but usually not necessary for pasture-raised birds.
- ◆ Flax Seeds – can raise the Omega-3 EFA's in eggs, but break up seeds or mix with granite grit to assure digestibility. Note: the best way to insure high-omega 3's in eggs is to allow birds to forage the pasture.