

# Barling Poultry

## Newsletter

November 2011



### **Moulting Hens**

Are your hens losing their feathers and looking a bit bald? Don't worry, they are going through their moult. Each year, hens shed their old feathers to grow new ones in the Autumn in preparation for the Winter months. They lose feathers in patches, around their necks, then their bottoms. Sometimes losing one patch overlaps with losing another and the hen looks quite bald! Usually the hen will stop laying eggs whilst

they moult – they don't take in enough protein to do both at once. You can help them by adding a little soya to their feed, such as a handful of cooked soya beans. Hens that come into lay after April don't tend to moult that year, but will start the following year. Our pens look like there has been a mass fox attack with feathers everywhere!

### **Eggs over Winter**

Most young hybrid hens will keep on laying eggs all through the Winter, but as hens get older they tend to take a break for the Winter.



You can help to maintain your egg supply by adding light to their house from November to end of January. Use the lowest wattage bulb you can find, fix this inside the roof of their house and plug into a digital timer. Give them light from 5am to 8am each morning and egg numbers should increase. This also helps young hens come into lay too. You can even use a car battery and 12V bulb!

[www.BarlingPoultry.co.uk](http://www.BarlingPoultry.co.uk)

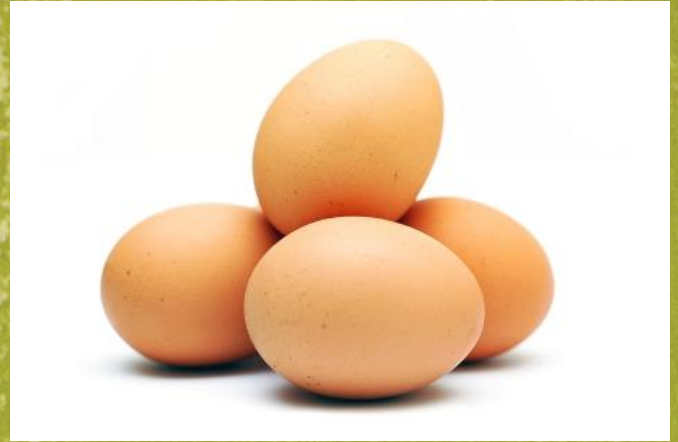
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## Incubators

Eggs are far less fertile this time of year, until February when the fertility greatly increases. Incubators are often cheaper to buy in the Winter (and they make a nice Christmas present too). You will see second hand ones on eBay, Preloved etc. New ones are available from around £85.

Incubators keep the eggs at the right temperature and also turn the eggs regularly from side to side. Manual incubators are cheaper, but you have to turn the eggs by hand at least 4 times every day – difficult to remember. You can build your own, but over the last 2 years the cost of small incubators has come down so much it really isn't worthwhile.

People tell us of years gone by when people used to hatch eggs in the bottom of the Aga, in the airing cupboard etc. They say necessity is the mother of invention! We don't know how people would have kept the temperature accurate, but suspect that more often than not the eggs were brought in for the last 3 days to hatch indoors.



### Fertile Eggs

*It is easy to purchase fertile eggs nowadays. We sell a lot of eggs throughout the year and you can also buy specific breeds on the Internet such as eBay. Amazingly we send our eggs all over the world, Paris, Portugal, Denmark, USA and they still seem to hatch very well. We have the biggest problem posting to Scotland for some reason (they often tend to arrive there broken).*

*Remember in the Spring hens will often go broody and that is the best way to hatch eggs. Hens will hatch any breed of hen/egg, and will even hatch duck eggs, goose eggs, turkey eggs or more exotic ones if you can get hold of them – from Rheas to Ostrich!*



**Hens** Just a note that we now have our last POL hens available this year. When they are gone they are gone!

**Geese** We have 8 white Emden cross geese for sale, 1 year old and ideal grass-cutters at £12.50 each.

**Day-old Table birds** 8<sup>th</sup> November is the last time this year we will have Hubbards available as day-olds. Only 25 left so contact us quickly if you want any.

### **FREE Piggy Wiggy Wiggys**

We have friends that are looking for a good home for 2 small pigs. A castrated pot bellied black male & a kune kune black female, both friendly & used to human interaction.



If you or anyone you know are interested, let us know quickly (BUT PLEASE – THESE PIGGY’S ARE NOT FOR THE TABLE!).

### **Winter Preparation**

We are often asked this, but no, hens do not need blankets or heating during the Winter months. Their feathers are a fantastic insulation from the cold, hence they grow new ones in Autumn. The biggest problem we have is their water freezing. This can break ordinary drinkers, so our handy hint is to buy washing-up bowls. Fill these with clean water and when you go out, they will be half empty with solid ice. Pour on boiling water from the kettle which melts the ice and the hens enjoy a warm drink. Repeat each day until the weather warms up! Give them corn as late as possible before they go to bed, as digesting corn warms them up (a bit like the Ready Brek advert).

*Reminder - Worm your hens every 3 months at the least...*

## Next Month..

Using Lime, planting linseed and protecting garden plants...

*"It's a poultry matter"*

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**[www.BarlingPoultry.co.uk](http://www.BarlingPoultry.co.uk)**

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