

Re: Laying feed, was re: HELP !!

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  - *Date:* Sun, 14 Oct 2007 10:37:53 +1300
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Jill wrote:

cheree wrote:

One of the key ingredients in laying feed that isn't in other pellets is calcium to promote healthy shells.

BUT it must be in correct balance with, at least, the phosphorus in the diet as well. All of the vits, mins and trace are interdependant and too much of one without the balancer can cause problems.

At that point my NZer reflex muttered "lime and super". Farmers have for years used lime and superphosphate, commonly applied by topdressing planes over the big farm properties. Also in the home garden, lime to sweeten the soil and unlock its goodness, esp where there is a lot of clay like mine (glug, glup) and the phosphate (super refers to the additional ingredients e.g. sulphur added to ground rock phosphate) for plant growth, but it has a souring effect so the lime is needed in some proportion on all soils to balance it.

The whole balance thing is SO important, isn't it! Sometimes the smallest deficit or over-supply makes a big difference, and it must have taken a long time to discover which of the tiny components unlocks the goodness. Example, our sheep down this part of the country used to get white muscle disease. A local scientist, Dr Marion White, discovered that it was because local soils are deficient in selenium. Selenium! Poisonous in larger quantities, indispensable for thrift in minuscule amounts. Today such research is relatively easy with the near-instantaneous analysis of substances but what a lot of long slow observation, experimentation and note-keeping must have taken place in the past to lead our forebears to the growing body of knowledge of practical animal husbandry and crop growing.

I used to buy oyster shell, or

break up their egg shells to make sure they got enough calcium,

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otherwise the shells started becoming a bit thin. With the laying feed, I don't have this problem. So, I don't buy any other calcium supplement for them, and the crushed egg shells go into my garden mulch pile.

It is best to have an insoluble grit available seperately for all birds to access as will  
And its is best for layers to have access to soluble grit seperately to access at will.

You've got me now – insoluble and soluble? Mine get oyster shell grit, always available in a separate container. It's interesting to watch who eats in and when. Are you also talking about the small pebbles for crop stones?

And will adding agricultural lime to the clay soil affect the amount of calcium the birds take in? I'm doing it because the new outdoor run is going to be a bog otherwise so it's a priority to build up a top layer of coarse vegetable matter (sticks, hedge prunings etc) and to work on making the top couple of spades–depth of soil less gluggy (there's always the indoor run for dust–bathing and hanging out in when the weather is bad – don't worry, they only go out when they feel like it!).

A L P

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