

Re: Ducks and chickens

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.agriculture.poultry/2008-05/msg00004.html>

- *From:* A_L_P <hay_hell_pea@xxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Fri, 02 May 2008 23:25:00 +1200
-

On Apr 26, 6:53 pm, "Jill" <n...@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

> Steve Newport wrote:
>> Hi all,
>
>> Can you keep ducks and chickens together?
>
>> We have seven chickens and wondered about adding one duck into the
>> run.
>
> Its not adviseable,
> – Ducks need company of their own kind, they are also flock creatures, and
> humans and chickens make poor ducks
> – Ducks need constant fresh water for keeping themselves healthy, without it
> they get serious eye and feather problems. If there is not a natural gently
> flowing water supply then this is a daily tip out and fill routine of the
> chosen artificial pond. This requires an area of very good drainage as its a
> lot of water to deal with on a daily basis. The ducks will love to dabble
> and dabble in this area and it gets naturally muddy. No problem for ducks as
> they can get themselves really clean, chickens cannot and end up collecting
> the mud on their feathers, and transferring to bedding and eggs.
> – Ducks will always go to bed rather damp and produce a vast quantity of
> muck, this means their bedding is always dirty and damp, again not a
> problem for them as they can get really clean first thing in their pond, but
> it is a serious problem for chickens.
> – Ducks are less productive and can get more nutrition from the outside if
> the range is reasonable so should not be ad lib fed layers pellets which is
> necessary for chickens and can cause problems in ducks.
> – Ducks are more severe on a limited area of ground than chickens, and can
> quickly turn it to mud.
>

Jill is right. (Ooh, surprise! Not!)

Ducks are mud factories. The only way for a duck not to turn an area gradually (but not slowly) into a mud-wallow is to keep it on concrete in a desert – slight snag: it wouldn't survive.

Muddy duck and chooky-pooppy sludge. Stinky, slippery (you truly don't want to fall over in it!) and just not nice to live with, for the chooks, or work in, for you.

Re: Ducks and chickens

Chickens' feet don't walk over the top of the sludge, they sink in and end up churning it up much worse than if you just have ducks in one place, chooks in another. Chickens make a wet yard pretty bad just by themselves, which is why they are best to have a roofed area to hang out in during wet weather.

An old friend of mine said that barn-raised intensively farmed chickens (and he had worked in such a place for several years – not a battery farm though – the birds had room to move) had better lives than a lot of the home poultry especially where they had a "nice, outdoor" run. The run was probably nice when it was first built, spacious, good netting to keep out predators, grass growing for the birds to peck and good earth for them to scratch in. But in a short time the grass was gone and after rain those little feet packed the soil down so hard! Then the dry weather came and baked the packed soil so the birds couldn't even make a dust bath.

It is tempting to set up a system that looks lovely – the charming as well as functional little pool that the duck(s) can dabble in and the chickens drink out of if they don't feel like going back to their water dish. But the lovely pool stinks to high heaven in SUCH a short time! And then, as Jill says, one has to empty all that water out – and there's nothing a duck likes better than soggy ground which it scuffles in with its beak before going to the pool and rinsing its mouth, so to speak. In the process of getting whatever bits of nutrition are in the ground it works its way further and further out, and of course in a few days the pool has to be emptied again..... And at that point it becomes obvious that the lovely system is rapidly turning to

_____!

Oh yes, another thing – the duck will rinse its mouth out in the chickens' water, so you'd be forever changing that too. I get wild mallards camping here and when the chook house door is open for them to go out and fossick all over the section, which has started again now the plums and most of the apples are finished, the mallards come in to do a bit of scavenging. So I have the chooks' water dishes up where they have to get on a broad perch to drink. The ducks haven't figured that one out. The mash and pellets are up in an extension built over the top of the spare (mum & chicks, isolation, newbies) pen accessible from the mezzanine floor of the main indoor run and the ducks aren't going to work that one out in a month of Sundays.

A L P

.