

Warm weather and supplements for OPTIMAL HEALTH

With summer having finally arrived, egg output has risen for most flocks, but the improving weather also leaves birds in danger of suffering a little with the heat.



Here, Clare Taylor (aka The Chicken Whisperer) discusses the ways in which you can support your birds to avoid any stress to their health at this time.

Birds are laying heavily therefore they need optimum nutrients

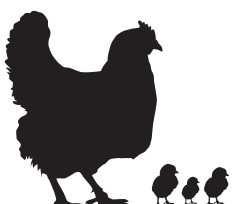
As the saying goes – you get out what you put in – and the same is true of your birds when it comes to feed and hence egg production and quality. Using a quality layers feed where protein and non-GM grains feature on the ingredient list and making sure that birds are healthy and happy is essential for good quality, tasty eggs.

Summertime is a time where this takes on additional importance, and any treats should be kept to a minimum and only at the end of the day. A few dark green leaves (savoy cabbage or Cavolo Nero are favourites) strung up in their run will give them a bit

of fun and provide plenty of vitamins to keep them healthy with the added bonus that the chlorophyll will deepen the orange of the egg yolks.

Consider supplements in either feed or water

Adding the correct supplements to feed or water can both help stimulate intake and add additional key nutrients to support healthy laying and egg quality. Nettex's **Mineral Boost Powder** makes an excellent addition to their regular pellets as it's aniseed content encourages them to feed when they might otherwise be put off by the heat and also supports their digestion. Mixing this with their pellets a couple of times a week will also provide extra calcium for strong eggshells at this time of peak laying whilst the seaweed contained in the product provides extra micro-nutrients, with the added benefit of that deep green to boost the yellow in the yolk.



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Personally, I tend to ring the changes and swap between using this in the feed or adding **Vit Boost Liquid Tonic** to their water. Extra drinkers are essential at this time of year, and while they're not too fussy about drinking from muddy puddles, chickens prefer their water to be cool, so a frozen water bottle in the drinker on very hot days – or a freezer block under it – will keep their water cool. Bunny bottles of water and **Vit Boost** in the run also provide plenty of opportunities for them to rehydrate.

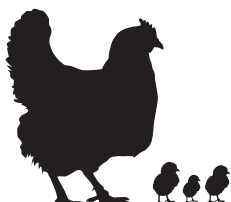
In warmer weather it is normal for your bird's droppings to be a little more liquid – they are taking in more water because moving liquid through their gut helps to cool them down (Excretory Heat Transfer). Chickens are unable to sweat like us, so heat stress can be a real problem in a very hot summer, their normal body temperature is 40.5°C (105°F), so you can imagine being feverish on a very hot day!

Choose the correct supplements for the season

Apple Cider Vinegar is an excellent poultry conditioner and gut health promoter; we tend to add it to the drinking water only in the cooler months as it can inhibit calcium uptake in hot weather, so soft shells would be more likely.

Despite the warmer weather and sunnier days, then summer also brings its challenges. Ensure you provide plenty

of shade for your birds, cool water to drink and support their health with good quality supplements to help lower stress levels leaving you with a flock of happy layers right throughout the summer.



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