



# Nutrition Excellence!

## January 2011

### Egg Laying Cycles



*Chickens begin laying eggs between 18 and 22 weeks of age, depending on the breed and environment. Don't be surprised if your hens lay smaller eggs that have softer shells in the beginning. They will reach their peak egg production (90 to 95 percent) about four to six weeks after they begin laying. For their first year of egg production, hens will almost lay an egg a day, producing nearly 25 pounds of eggs! It takes approximately 25 hours for a hen to produce an egg, so the time of day at which they lay will gradually increase.*

After the first 12 months, egg production will drop to about 65 percent, and your hens will lay less often. However, the eggs that they do lay will be larger (jumbo eggs) than the eggs produced by younger chickens. Once your hens have reached between 2 and 3 years of age, they are basically finished with peak production laying. To keep your egg production going, and to have a constant supply, it is suggested that you raise new replacement chicks each year. This way as your laying hens are getting older and decreasing in production, your new chicks are getting ready to start their peak production.

To make sure your hens have the most productive laying cycle, it's important to manage them correctly. Age obviously plays a huge factor in the laying cycle, but so does light, disease, and nutrition.

#### Light

A chicken's internal clock is dictated by sunlight. The amount of light they receive is directly related to their

production of eggs; the less light they receive, the fewer eggs they produce. To maintain a more consistent production level, you should maintain a constant light source throughout the year. Purina recommends giving laying hens 14 to 16 hours of light (natural or artificial) a day.

#### Illness

Making sure your chicken has a balanced diet will help reduce the effect of nutritional health challenges that could decrease egg production. Additionally, you can consider getting your hens vaccinated, especially if you take birds to shows, purchase additional birds and add them to your flock, or have had a problem with disease in the past.

#### Nutrition

If a hen isn't receiving the correct nutrition, her egg production will decrease or even stop. The quality of her eggs will also suffer.

#### WFS Fancy Feathers Egg Booster 18

WFS manufactures its own line of poultry feed called Fancy Feathers. The Fancy Feathers Egg Booster 18 is a complete pelleted feed to provide everything needed for a laying hen. It has 18% crude protein and contains proper levels of energy, protein, vitamins and minerals. With a 3.4% calcium level, there is no need to add additional calcium to the hen's diet.

It is pelleted for palatability and less waste so you get the most out of your feed.

You can feed Egg Booster from age of 18 weeks through the egg production period cycle.

For more information about our poultry feed line, please contact your local WFS location.

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