

Ventura Grain Co, Inc. Guide to Raising a Healthy Backyard Flock.



Before committing you and your family to a backyard flock, make sure you check with your city and town's restrictions to raising birds in your backyard.

All of the baby chicks sold at our store, except for Thanksgiving turkeys, come from Privett Hatchery in New Mexico. This hatchery has a fantastic reputation for healthy birds and a great variety of unique and traditional laying hens. For birds that are sexed (laying hens only) the hatchery is 90% accurate in sexing. Ventura Grain only orders female layers.

The birds are not vaccinated.

If you are new to raising a backyard flock, we advise setting up your brooder, where they will reside before bringing them home. This way temperature can be pre-determined. If you have young children, please take the time to explain that the first two weeks of having a baby chick at home is critical. We do not advise handling of the young birds during this time. Please wash your children's hands regularly after handling your birds.

Feeding recommendations:

Baby Laying Chicks

*** Initial Brooder Temp 85-90**

Day 1 to week 8:

Ventura *Everyday Medicated Chick Starter Mash*

Medicated chick starter contains a Coccidiostat that helps the body of the young bird become exposed to cocci bacteria and develop a resistance to the deadly bacterium.

*Administer Pro-biotics during this time

Week 8 until first egg:

Ventura *Everyday Chick Grower Crumble*

Laying Stage:

Ventura *Everyday Chicken Layer Ration* Small Pellet or Mash

This diet is appropriate for laying chickens. It is fortified with organic trace minerals and oyster shells to help the bird develop hard shells. Try to provide 14-16 hours of light a day to produce eggs daily. Around 18 months of age, layer birds will go through a molting process. This is natural that lasts around 3 months. Ventura's *Everyday Layer Pellet* is an appropriate diet during this time. If a higher protein diet is desired, Ventura's *Everyday Game Bird Pellet or Crumble* ration can be substituted.

Fast Growing Cornish Cross Broilers

Day 1 to Day 12:

Ventura *Everyday Medicated Chick Starter*

Day 12 until slaughter:

Ventura *Everyday Broiler Grower Crumble*

This diet is appropriate for meat birds being raised for slaughter. The ration provides necessary nutrition for optimal meat growth. The broiler chicks offered at Ventura Grain are ready for slaughter in about 8 weeks, dressing at about 5lbs.

Baby Ducks- Initial Brooder Temp 95

Day 1 to Week 6

Ventura *Everyday Game Bird Crumble*

Week 6 –Life of Duck

Ventura *Everyday Game Bird Pellet*

Baby Chick and Duck care tips:

- Thoroughly clean and disinfect the brooding areas before your birds are brought home.
- Use kiln dried pine shavings for bedding. Do not use cedar shavings. The oils and fumes in the cedar are not healthy for baby birds.
- Keep your birds in a very temperate environment under a temperature controlled heat lamp with no drafts or fluctuations in air temp. When baby birds have no feathers they cannot regulate their internal temperature. Place your chicks in a place that is comfortable in your home for your family for about 6 weeks. After that time, and taking into consideration outdoor air temperature, growing chicks should be able to reside outside in their chicken coop.
- Initial brooder temperature for chicks is 90 degrees and for ducks is 95 degrees. If birds are becoming too warm, they will flock to the outside of their brooder, however they will flock under the heat lamp if they are too cold. The brooder lamp should be raised up or down to achieve desired temperature. After two weeks the temperature should be reduced by about 5 degrees each week until the 6 week point.
- When planning a chicken coop, plan on making it accessible for easy cleaning.

***DO NOT GET YOUR BABY CHICKS OR DUCKS WET.**

*Once baby chicks or ducks are brought home, they must be kept dry, fed, and watered.



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