

## **How Quickly We Forget.**

Occasionally I look through the Tips and Secrets that I wrote on my website and realized I have been forgetting to do something basic that I once felt was very necessary. Maybe my mind is not the best place to store all the important information. Good notes can help one from missing the most basic needs of our pigeons. We continuously read the how simple this pigeon game is; a good loft, no drafts, good pigeons, good health, sound management and motivation. Seems easy enough.

When I look at the basics I think of things we can control with the pigeons.

**Good Loft:** Dry, spacious, sunlit and well ventilated. More pigeons need more air. More air equals more drafts. When we hear no drafts you can bet there are very few pigeons in the loft. Controlled temperatures, humidity and drafts only pertains to the race team. Many of my pigeons live in open flight pens year round and the health is amazing.

**Good Pigeons:** Today everyone has fairly good pigeons. This was not the case 20 or more years ago. Let me tell you something. Everyone likes to reminisce about the great pigeons of yesteryear. One thing I know for sure... never in the history of the sport have there been better pigeons than what we have today. Selection and competition has steadily improved the pigeons. Keep in mind not everyone improves. Many ruin a family of pigeons in two generations.

If you like one loft racing, buy pigeons that are winning for many fanciers under many systems in different climates. Be careful of someone that totally dominates their competition. If a loft totally dominates the competition they do not have competition. Look at the Antwerp region of Belgium. No

one dominates. Top fanciers have standout seasons and stand out pigeons but no domination. Learn to read a race sheet, look at prevailing winds and see who really had the best pigeons in the race. The longer the distance the it is more pigeon and less system comes into play.

**Good Health:** Pigeons that are not stressed and not crowded tend to stay much healthier than crowded pigeons. Simple fact is, give them plenty of space, super sound nutrition and your pigeons will glow year round.

Sickness will not be a problem with space and care. You must find the carrying capacity of your loft to determine what number per section is best. A few less pigeons with increased health in the loft or section will raise excellent young and or perform better on the race team.

It is easy to keep them healthy with natural products once they are very healthy. Start with the basics. The pigeons have to be worm and parasite free. Canker is the next issue but a good natural immunity to canker is important. Do not treat more than you have to. Keep the breeders worm and external parasite free with all their vaccinations up to date and success will follow. The race team will need more regular treatments for Canker and respiratory. The less the breeding pigeons are treated the healthier over time they will become.

My favorite natural products are apple cider vinegar, probios, oregano extract and fresh ground garlic. The other most important products for keeping pigeons healthy is vast array of mineral supplements in front of the pigeons at all times. I will get into this a little later.

**Sound Management:** Pigeon care must a priority 365 days of the year. The best lofts focus on care year round. We are not able to

just put them away until next season like a bowling ball. The care that is provided in the off season while the pigeons are molting will benefit during the racing and breeding seasons.

**Motivation:** Pigeons are territorial and fly for the love of their loft and their territory within the loft. This goes hand and hand with not over crowding the loft.

A pigeon that owns several nest boxes has more motivation than a pigeon that owns a V perch. Motivation and tricks can work for short races. Long distance depends on the pigeons innate love of home and desire to get home to defend the property it owns in the loft.

**One Loft Racing:** Today the focus for many fanciers is one loft racing or out of area futurities. The fancier has only a short time with the babies before they are in another's care. Those 30 to 40 days of a pigeon's life are crucial to the future of the one loft entries success.

### **Things to keep in mind:**

A) One missed feeding will stunt a baby. Rich high protein, high fat feed must be available at all times. Long periods between the babies being fed by the parents can also stunt the babies. If you winter breed you must run lights for at least 18 hours a day. Getting lazy while the babies are in the nest will lead to disastrous results.

B) Minerals, Minerals, Minerals: You can feed the breeders an adequate mix with endless minerals and your babies will be gorgeous. Feed the greatest grains available without minerals and your babies will be stunted. Throughout the entire year our pigeons have the minerals available at all times, Belgian Pink vita-mineral, brown mineral blocks, Jovati Minerals (Ganus Minerals), pick pots with mineral blocks

inside, magnesium blocks, black minerals, grit mix, calcium chips etc etc etc. We buy different brands now and again to make sure the pigeons not missing anything. This year we raised nine rounds from our best pigeons. They raised babies right through the entire molt and at any stage of the process the pigeons handled perfect. Some of this was the quality of the pigeon, much was due to the minerals.

If your breeders start to break down or go light during the breeding system they are mineral deficient. Five to seven rounds bred from healthy pigeons with endless minerals should be no big deal. Our breeders raised babies through the heat of the summer with no ill effect.

C) Vaccinations are the next step the owner must do before sending the pigeons to the one loft race. PMV at weaning and Salbac or Salmonella Vaccine right before shipping is adequate.

D) Shipping. If you are sending four babies in a box use a four bird box. Do not try to save \$50 on shipping for pigeons being entered into a Million Dollar Race. I have received up to nine pigeons in a four bird box, that the owner wanted me to ship to Sun City. When I look in box like that the first thing I think is, "they have no chance".

E) Buy a bulb syringe at the pharmacy. This is a rubber tear drop shaped syringe designed to clear mucous from infants nose or mouth. I place about an ounce of water in every youngster as I place them in the box. The rubber syringe is easy to use and you will not have to worry about the babies dehydrating on the trip to the race.

McLaughlin Lofts has applied the above methods to our babies this year and we have had top scores in many one loft races and

futurities so far this season. This includes  
firsts in races within the series.

Until Next Time,

Frank McLaughlin  
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