



THE TIME IS RIGHT TO DO YOUR CHOOK CHECK-UP

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As the days are getting longer, there is change going on in the brain of every chook kept in backyards across the country.

Their brains are telling their bodies to restart or ramp up egg production after a slow-down over the coldest period of winter.

Poultry enthusiast and animal nutritionist with animal feed solutions brand Barastoc, Elise Davine, says these changes, which collectively are called the Spring Flush, make now the perfect time for both seasoned and rookie chook owners to do their annual Chook Check-up.

“We’re excited to see a resurgence of people owning chooks, whether it’s to have freshly laid eggs, to teach kids about lifecycle or as your way of tackling the food waste challenge – but like every pet, there is a responsibility that comes with it,” Elise says.

“During National Chook Health Week, which starts today and runs until Sunday, poultry owners are encouraged to take charge of their chook’s health.”

The first thing she encourages people to check is that their chooks are alert and are moving about, eating and drinking.

The second thing people can do to support their chook’s health is to give their coop a good spring clean.

“Pull on your gloves and clean out dirty nesting and other dropping build-ups because hens like to lay in a place that’s clean and secure,” Elise says.

“The third thing we love to see poultry owners do in spring is check their food – egg-laying is very demanding on a hen and you need to make sure she’s getting everything she needs to stay healthy and produce quality, nutritious eggs.”

Elise suggests people look for a high-quality, balanced and nutritious feed with a higher protein content.

“Remember that you get back what you put in – the better the quality of the feed, the better the quality of the eggs you’ll get,” she says.

Elise says for a simple guide on chook health at this time of year, the Barastoc Chook Check-up Checklist is available at <http://barastocpoultry.com.au/>.

“It’s a simple guide of six things poultry owners can check off at the beginning of spring to give your hens the best chance of being healthy and producing quality eggs for you and your family,” she says.

Barastoc Poultry Young Ambassadors tips on chook health

Queensland – Letisha Johnson

Eighteen-year-old Letisha Johnson is excited to help spread the word about chook health during National Chook Health Week.

Despite being busy studying a dual degree in Agribusiness and Sustainable Agriculture at The University of Queensland, Letisha always makes time to pick up and give her chickens a good check over. While she breeds and shows birds, the Boonah local says the fundamentals of chook health are the same whether people have one or two hens, or dozens.

“Chooks are pretty easy to care for and they are such worthwhile pets. They’re great companions, each chook has a unique personality, and you get fresh eggs from them too.”

NSW – Nathan Quayle

Year 9 student Nathan Quayle started breeding poultry at the family’s Tamworth property four years ago. In spring, the 15-year-old says it’s important that owners move the birds onto top-quality feed. Doing so will ensure they produce good eggs and if the eggs are fertilised, the newborn chicks are nice and healthy.

He also recommends thoroughly cleaning the pens at the beginning of spring. Nathan recently poured his savings from working part-time at McDonald’s into a second-hand greyhound dog run so that his birds could stretch their wings in a roomy enclosure, and so he – at 6 ft 3” – could take better care of their living quarters.

Victoria – Mitchell Carrigan-Walsh

Mitchell Carrigan-Walsh, 24, highlights the importance of regularly worming and delousing chickens.

Mitchell lives near Camperdown and persuaded his mother, Debbie, to buy him his first show bird at the local agriculture show when he was just seven or eight years old. His advice for any newcomers to raising poultry is to take the time to ensure your set-up is the best it can be for your chooks. Thriving chooks need properly built, dry shelters.

The other tip he gives to poultry owners, is to join their local poultry club.

“Most poultry clubs have bird night once or twice a month, you bring a chook along and ask questions,” he says.

Find out more

For more information on keeping healthy chickens, see The Barastoc Chook Book at <http://barastocpoultry.com.au/chook-book/>

Photographs of Elise, the Young Ambassadors and chickens are available in this [Dropbox folder](#).

Media enquiries

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