

# Words of Wisdom from Joel Henning

This is a compiled list of recommendations for raising and showing Polish by Joel Henning from the 2014 National Meet and the 2016 National Meet.

## Among his breeding tips:

Collect breeders 1 month prior to breeding but keep separate

2-5 females to 1 male

Clip crests or tape up with NexCare paper medical tape to allow enough light in their eyes plus it prevents feathers in the female's crest from falling out when the male grabs it

Use artificial light to extend "daylight" and encourage egg laying

Clip the fluff on the male for better contact but not so short as to be prickly

To prevent egg eating put a ceramic egg in with pullets and cockerels to satisfy their curiosity before the real eggs come

Keep birds healthy with plenty of water or their egg cycle can be off, frostbitten birds may become infertile for up to a year

Hatching high number of chicks allows you to cull heavily

Every 2 months rotate your males in your pen of females to get multiple breedings per year, **but keep the females in their pen with the same hens "for life"**

Use a high-quality feed and keep the water fresh

#1—Keep Good Records!

**Use colored spiral bands to identify different pen's offspring, and one color of another type for year of hatch**

**Breed WC blues to WC blacks to improve lacing on blues**

## Incubating:

Heat the egg trays before putting them in incubator to reduce temp fluctuation, don't adjust temp to accommodate new trays

Resist the urge to candle too often.

**An embryo's spine develops between days 3-7, don't candle until day 15-16**

Don't candle again until day 18 then in the hatching tray on day 19

Brooding: Spray CocciVax on chick food to protect them coccidiosis

A small dowel in the brooder teaches chicks to roost, they will continue to roost as they grow and build wing & chest muscles

Brood chicks in open or clear containers at waist level so they get used to movement as you walk by

Tap on brooder and make lots of noise so they become accustomed to it and aren't frightened of noise at shows

Clean the waterers at least once per day and give fresh food daily

Rotate chicks every week to larger brooders, Keep brooders no more than 20% full

### **Growing out chicks:**

**Use a raised brooder box with plexi-glass on front- easier to evaluate how chicks stand for early culling and chicks end up calmer.**

Chicks that stand straight up tend to have legs positions too far back causing low wing carriage and squirrel tail

**Pick chicks with their legs in the center of their bodies, so that their back is level**

**Pick chicks that do not have a reddish tinge to their down**

Choose chicks whose front of crest grows up not forward over its beak

Separate young cockerels and pullets as soon as possible

To stop crest picking use a 24% protein feed and sprinkle some lavender powder on the crest **and make sure there is food and water 24 hours a day. also, keep their crest dry.**

Tape up the crest of any cockerel being picked on but do not tape the other cockerels crests

Clean the waterers at least once per day- **feed in the morning AND the evening!! and keep food and water available 24 hours**

Long blood feathers in cockerels' tails are a sign of long coverts in adulthood

### **General tips:**

Vaccinate all birds for MG, LT and Coryza, cull any bird showing signs of Coryza

Check for mites every 6 weeks, treat with Frontline regularly If mites are found clean and vacuum the pens then spray with a pesticide like permethrin

Address sickness immediately! Separate and treat sick birds and give them plenty of air circulation  
Dispose of eggs and dead birds properly to prevent attracting predators

Bury flat coils of barbed wire at the perimeter of your pens. Any digging predator will instantaneously stop.

**To have less white tipping on mature birds- pick chicks with very black down, black toes, & black beaks.**

**You want green sheen, not purple. Purple bars are from stress and will normally molt back in green.**

### **Tips for Exhibitors:**

Don't bring transport boxes near your pens to keep show-contracted disease & pests away from your birds

When returning from a show prepare a de-miting station by spraying a cardboard box inside and out with Adams Flea Control, add a little bit of shavings then spray each bird topically with Adams and place them in the box for 15 minutes. Remove the bird and let them shake off any mites that may have been brought home.

Always keep birds in show condition, wash them 1 week before and preen 3 days before each show

**Put birds in their transport boxes at the end of the show day then coop them in again the morning so they are rested and fresh**

### **Washing birds:**

- 1) Wash in a bucket of Ivory dish soap and baby shampoo for 10 seconds then rinse with running water.
- 2) Wash in a bucket of Ivory dish soap and Ivory Snow laundry concentrate and massage in-careful the bird will be slippery-then rinse in running water
- 3) Rinse in a bucket of 1" plain vinegar to 5 gallons warm water
- 4) Rinse with plain water. Set bird on roost in dark, 78 degree room for 4 hours. If you will be plucking crests do not separate crest too much to reach the feather.

Remember: It takes 7 weeks for new feathers to grow in.