
Prepping for Fall Shows

Written by Courtney DuCharme, 1st published July 2018 in PBC Newsletter Summer 2018

As I am getting ready for fall show season I have been going over grow outs to see my top prospects and evaluating my breeder pens for who will stay and who will be sent off this year to make room for the up and coming birds. I also am having to prep other areas for the birds and myself to attend my shows. Aside from culling down the flock based on type these are also things to do to get ready for shows. I would like to point out this is the way I do things- it does not mean it is right for everyone nor that it is the only way to do things. This is just what has worked for me and for the last 8 years I have added or removed things to this list as I find things that work better. I am always trying to learn different ways to do things, as it helps if you have a different result.

PARASITE CONTROL: As I move birds into individual show pens or group pens for some pullets I went ahead and started parasite treatments on everyone. Every 6-week-old and older grow out and all the breeders got a dose of Frontline, Valbazen, and Wazine. And then we did a round of Corid on all ages. I want the next 16 weeks to have as little stress on my birds and them to be able to utilize all their energy into growing well and/or getting the best feather growth.

I treat everyone with Frontline and Valbazen several times a year. My grow outs, due to me not using medicated feeds, always have one week a month of Corid or Baycox until they are over 16 weeks old. When I first move babies from brooders they go in wire pens for a few weeks to a month, I move and sort birds around each Corid treatment time so that will start when they either move to another pen (when condensing “keeper” groups after sorting) or their group is moved from wire pen to larger grow out pen. I always treat the breeders for parasites in early spring when going into breeder pens, mid-summer when sorting after breeding is done, and in late fall to prep for winter. They will get extra Frontline if mites are found during monthly checks and a week before shows (not treated at least a month in between).

FEED: I prefer to not do a lot of treats with my birds as I feel they get what they need from crumbles and pellets and will eat less of what they need if offered treats regularly (I understand cause I love cookies). From hatching I make sure they are on a game bird grower crumble until they are at least 8 weeks old and then they are switched to Feather Fixer. Sometimes they get a little scratch with Vitamin B oil in it. I will start the babies off with Rooster Booster Vitamin/electrolyte/probiotic powder in their water. They will also get this twice a week after they are feathered out and in pens with automatic waters. Maybe once or twice a month everyone gets some red cell in their water- very diluted (light yellow water) or mine won't drink it.

TIME OFF OF WORK: All the fall show I want to go to are in November between the first 3 weekends, unfortunately working in the medical field I do not have all my weekends off and sometimes am on call for a weekend. 2 of my 3 shows I would like to attend have either a work weekend or are on call weekend. I was able to put in for time off for Ohio Nationals and was approved so that took care of my work weekend show. However, Polish Nationals will depend on if I can get another nurse to pick up my call and give away 2 days I will need for driving there and back (Thursdays and Monday). Fowl Fest is here in MI and even if I can't get someone to pick up my Friday I can still make this show because it is “local”.

GROOMING/HANDLING: I start tidying up my birds' crests and making sure their nails and beaks are in good order 3 or more months before birds start to show. I do not start this until I have picked out my keepers as I do not want to sell someone a groomed bird, I feel you should buy the "raw" bird, so you know its faults. I want my show string to look great and be used to being penned up and picked up so the judges don't get scratched up and my birds show off at the show. My cock's spurs are also kept blunted and short, for my hens comfort as well as to keep judges safe if the bird went to a show.

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