

## **Nest issues**

### *Why doesn't my chook lay in the nest?*

1/ Most commonly nesting problems are related to the position of the nest regarding light. The birds instinctively like to nest in a dark place, but the darkness can be related to position of view. If I look at the nest with the light behind me, the nest looks lighter than if I am looking into the light when I look at the nest. Always see the nest from the birds eye view. So place the nest against a background light. I like to place the nest below the wire mesh on the front wall. That way the bird is looking at the light and the nest looks dark.

2/ If the nest is on the back wall, the bird has the light over its shoulder and so the nest looks light, so often the eggs will be against the front wall below the mesh. If the nest is on the side wall, often the eggs end up behind the nest, again it's a dark spot, double shaded.

3/ Young pullets are often influenced by access and the appearance of other eggs in the nest. Placing ceramic or plastic nest eggs help overcome any negative in the appearance of the nest.

4/ Sometimes there is not enough nests, one nest box to 5 birds is good, a waiting bird can easily get into the habit of 'drop it' anywhere.

### *What is the best nest material?*

1/ Nest material can be straw, hat, rice hulls, wood shavings, pine needles, virtually any material, but the material is less important than the habits (Note: rollaway nests don't use litter)

2/ Habits are important, as once the birds develops a bad habit, namely sleeping in the nest, then the material in the nest must absorb the night manure(40% of the total droppings), and if this is the case dirty eggs are often a problem, and nest cleaning a regular chore. Shavings works better in this circumstance (highest absorbency per volume).

3/ So close up the nests before the onset of lay, make sure the birds all perch and have the habit of perching (train them if necessary) (go in after dark and place any non-perching birds up on the perches) make sure the perch is higher than the nest, then give the birds access to the nests. The birds should have enough time to explore the nests prior to starting to lay, so access from, about 18 weeks is good as long as they are not showing any tendency to sleep in the nests.

### *My hens are eating the eggs!*

1/ Hens sometimes trample and eat the egg in the nest. Once there is habit of egg eating, it can be quite difficult to deter the hens from eating them. Crows or rats are sometimes responsible for eggs disappearing or being eaten also. A helpful solution

is the rollaway nest. Once the hen stands up from the nesting position, the rolls away on a gentle gradient into a catchment compartment that is not accessible. Usually the compartment requires a flap to be opened to obtain the egg.

In summary, perches higher than the nest, nest in apparently darkest spot, nest access after perching habit established, but before onset of lay, nest egg helps. There are different nest options available.

See [various nests here](#) and [ceramic eggs here](#)

**Bellsouth**  
POULTRY EQUIPMENT