

7 KEYS TO RAISING PASTURED POULTRY



**OKIE  FARM
& FEED**



WELCOME!

This “7 Keys To Raising Pastured Poultry” guidebook is provided in order to give you an insight into raising Pastured Poultry. Ginger and I pray this guide will be useful to you and serve as a reference for the growth of your flock. These 7 Keys will help you get a quick start and avoid mistakes we made. This isn’t a complete book on everything you need to know about Pastured Poultry, but we try to cover a variety of topics and techniques for raising a successful flock.

If there is anything we can do to help you along this journey, or you need quality pasture raised chicks to start your flock then reach out to us at

admin@okiehatchery.com

Brian & Ginger
Master Breeders



#1 MOBILE COOP:

**“BY WISDOM A HOUSE IS BUILT,
AND THROUGH UNDERSTANDING
IT IS ESTABLISHED; THROUGH
KNOWLEDGE ITS ROOMS ARE
FILLED...” PROV 24:3-4**

BY OKIE FARM & FEED STAFF

<http://www.okiefarmfeed.com/>

As defined by the American Pastured Poultry Producers Association (APPPA), “Pastured Poultry” means the poultry will live a majority of its life on pasture and will be rotated to fresh green grass in a managed (i.e., deliberate) way that benefits the bird, the land, the community, and the eater. See the APPPA article at <https://apppa.org/Free-Range> for further explanation between “Free Range” and “Pasture Raised” Poultry. For best Pasture Raised practices, a mobile coop will facilitate this practice of husbandry. Mobile coops come in all shapes and sizes, but the components required are pretty much the same. The coop needs to be constructed in a way that makes it mobile and can be moved by hand or by equipment on a regular basis.

You need a frame that makes up the structure. This can be made from lumber, metal pipe, or even PVC pipe. Most coops are covered in protective wire to contain the birds and/or protect them from predators. Wire isn’t a requirement if the birds are within a poultry netting perimeter or a Livestock Guardian Dog (LGD) is present.

The coop needs to be partially or totally covered to give the poultry relief from the elements. This is important to keep birds dry and out of wind cold winds. Also, to provide shade during hot, sunny days. For plans of the Okie Farm Mobile Coop, click the link [Okie Coop](#)



The most important thing to understand about most poultry is that they are carnivores. They require protein in order to develop properly and survive. They for sure need plenty of protein in order to lay eggs.

There are three main types of food that are recommended for proper development: Chick Starter feed, Grower/Broiler feed, & Adult/Layer feed. Check out Okie Organic Feed website for detailed info on these types of feed.

Pastured Poultry can obtain a large portion of their diet while foraging on a good pasture. They eat weeds, grass, & flowers, but also need bugs, seeds & grains to sustain them. If poultry do not have access to fresh pasture daily, then they will require to be fed or supplemented with a grain feed.

Dried crickets, Meal Worms and Black Soldier Fly Larvae are a great supplemental treat for your flock.

#2 FOOD:

“YOUR CHICKS ARE ONLY AS GOOD AS THE SOURCE OF YOUR EGGS.”

**BRIAN
HEAD HATCHER**

OKIE FARM & FEED STAFF

#3 WATER:

POULTRY REQUIRE LOTS OF WATER. NEXT TO PROTECTION ,THIS IS THE MOST CRITICAL PROVISION WE PROVIDE. CHECK THEIR WATER EVERY DAY, EVEN WHEN IT'S NOT HOT!

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There is no magic formula for watering poultry. Just make sure they constantly have water. Chickens drink a lot of water, more than you think they do. We've had 20 chickens drink 2-3 gallons of water per day.

Poultry get thirsty even in freezing weather. In wintertime, if temps get below freezing then check their water 2x per day minimum. Their water can freeze quickly and a few hours without water can be critical to their survival. Water is critical to generating energy to stay warm for poultry.

Laying hens can stop laying for up to a few days if they go a few hours without proper water. Ensure that your poultry get fresh water regularly. This is beneficial to their health and they don't like drinking dirty water any more than we do.

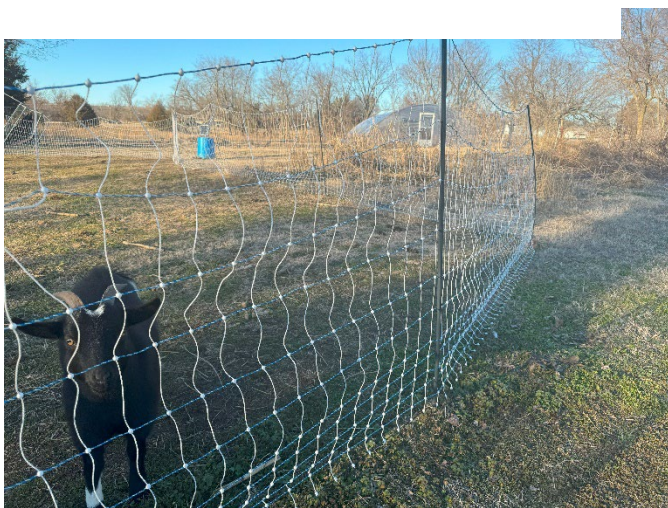


#4

NETTING:

POULTRY NETTING IS WORTH ITS WEIGHT IN GOLD. IT CAN PROVIDE YOU PEACE OF MIND TO KNOW THAT YOUR BIRDS HAVE THAT ADDITIONAL LAYER OF PROTECTION

BY OKIE FARM & FEED STAFF



There are several reasons why you would want to contain your poultry. Protection, ease of caring for them, separation of breeds or sexes. Most poultry can fly, some. Surely enough to get over a poultry netting. Clipping their wings can help contain them where you want them. Protection of your poultry is critical. If they aren't protected, then they won't be around long. Fencing helps to contain your flock, but more importantly it helps protect them from predators. You can go as strong on protection as you feel you need, even adding overhead netting if needed. We recommend energizing your poultry netting to give a near impenetrable barrier to small predators.

We have free range chickens that go where they want during the day, but then go back to their coop at night. The permanent coop is within a fenced area, but the gate stays open. This helps to contain them and makes the Livestock Guardian Dogs (LGD) job easier. Without the LGD we would need to close the gate each night.

For our Pastured Poultry, they are in a secured mobile coop, with energized poultry netting around several of the coops and a LGD inside the fence. This is the best and most secured paddock we can provide. We have lost zero birds to predators from the ground or sky.

#5 *PROTECTION:*



WITHOUT PROTECTION YOUR FLOCK WILL NOT LAST VERY LONG. LIVESTOCK GUARDIAN DOGS (LGD) ARE THE BEST PROTECTION YOU CAN BUY.

BY OKIE FARM & FEED STAFF

For Pastured Poultry, you need an adequate level of protection for your flock. Since most Pastured Poultry are out in a pasture or large yard they tend to be remote from humans or other deterrence's. This makes your flock even more susceptible to predators. Coops or even netting may not be enough to keep predators out. This is why a LGD is so valuable. We chose the Great Pyrenees (GP) breed. There are other breeds that do well, and some are mixed breeds. We have a history of knowing that GP do well with poultry. These dogs are bred with the instincts to guard all sorts of livestock. There is a bit of learning curve to get them to know the animals and know what they are protecting. Our chickens are worth a lot of money and are not easily replaced. So it is worth it to us to have a guard dog for Pastured Poultry. We never really have to worry about our flock day or night.



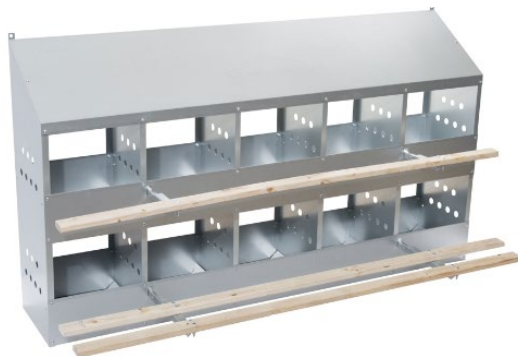
**CLICK HERE FOR
INFORMATION ON LGD's!**

<http://www.okiefarmfeed.com/>

#6 EGG COLLECTION:

LAYING HENS CAN LAY UP TO 300 EGGS PER YEAR. THAT IS ANYWHERE FROM 3-7 EGGS PER BIRD PER WEEK. OF COURSE, IF YOU HAVE BROILERS THEN THIS ISN'T APPLICABLE.

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Laying hens on pasture will lay eggs whether there is a nesting box or not. We need to provide them a place to not only lay their eggs, but to protect them. Since there may be many poultry in a mobile coop, eggs may get stepped on or pecked if not in a safe place. Poultry prefer privacy when they are laying; like us when going #2 (LOL). If you can provide that place, then they will be happier and tend to lay more often. Nesting boxes with a curtain, soft nesting material, and plenty of room is ideal for laying hens. There are many styles and manufacturers of nesting boxes, from very simple to automated one's. Price varies greatly! I have had poultry lay in a 5-gallon bucket and up to the fanciest rollout nesting box. Check out our [favorite nesting box](http://www.okiefarmfeed.com/) here. Decide what is best for your farm and budget.

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Laying hens and roosters need a place to perch at night or to get up off the ground during inclement weather. They feel safer when up high and away from any ground threats. If poultry don't feel safe, then they can get stressed and can affect their laying production. The more dominant poultry tend to get on the higher levels of the roost if available. During cold weather, poultry like to get off the cold ground, puff their feathers out and sit on their feet to keep them warm.

Roosting bars and ladders can be made from many types of materials; finished lumber, tree branches or other material. Find what works best for your flock and just make sure they have a place to rest, besides in the nesting boxes. Broiler poultry need a place to roost, even though they stay on the ground. It is best if they have a dry area out of inclement weather.

#7 ROOSTING AREA:

LAYING HENS WANT TO BE UP OFF THE GROUND FOR SLEEPING. THIS IS ESSENTIAL FOR THEM TO FEEL SAFE AND TO PROTECT THEM FROM WEATHER ELEMENTS. OF COURSE, IF YOU HAVE BROILERS THEN THEY ROOST ON THE GROUND. THEY ARE TOO HEAVY TO GET ON A ROOSTING BAR.

BY OKIE FARM & FEED STAFF



Credit: [From Scratch Farmstead](http://www.okiefarmfeed.com/)

