

Poultry Project Newsletter

Winter Conditioning: Cage & Coop cleaning

When birds are judged, they are judged on type, color, and condition--in that order. And while condition is the last of the three, it is the only one that we can physically change about our birds without getting a new bird.

It has finally warmed up after what has seemed like weeks of cold weather, so today my son and I headed outside to clean some cages. Clean cages and coops keep your birds clean and your eggs clean. They also help prevent the spread of disease.

Cleaning cages or coops is always a good chance to check over your birds for health issues. A small but common problem in winter are manure balls on the toenails. As the birds walk through their manure, sometimes the manure freezes on their toenails and balls up. You can try and gently remove the balls by pushing them off the toenail, but if they don't come off easily, do not force them off. You can lose a toenail that way or at the very least have them break. A short soak in warm water will remove that ball without



blood loss.

Other issues I am looking for are leg mites, bumblefoot, and ESPECIALLY feather mites. As we moved the birds, I noticed something odd about one of the males--he looked like he had been pecked on his head. Since cocks generally are the ones who peck heads and not the hens, I took a closer look at him. Sure enough, this guy was crawling with mites. He had them on his head, on his tail, and all around his vent. Normally, in winter, if this is just a small infestation I might just use a poultry powder that contains permethrin (found at Fleet Farm) because I don't like getting my birds wet with a spray, but this guy needed a lot more attention than that. This called for a bath.

Baths are my first line of defense for a really bad infestation because they have the benefit of drowning mites and washing away eggs at the same time the bird is being treated against future infestation.

For a bad infestation, I wash with a flea and tick shampoo for cats.

Unfortunately,

shampoos formulated for mites on birds just really aren't available. Cat shampoo is made for a more lightweight animal and is less toxic because cats are frequent groomers. I personally have used Adams Flea & Tick (contains permethrin and can be found at Walmart and pet supply stores) and also Vet's Best Flea & Tick (Petco) with all-natural ingredients. I have had success with both. Alternatively, I have also used a baby shampoo for the wash and about a teaspoon of concentrated permethrin in the rinse water. Concentrated permethrin can be found at Tractor Supply in the fly and pest preventative aisle.

Signs of a bird with mites are lethargy, drooping tails, feather loss, scabby-looking skin—especially around the tail, feathers around the vent looking very dirty, and, of course, mites crawling on the skin and around the vent. The Chicken Chick has a good article with pictures all about external poultry parasites. <https://the-chicken-chick.com/poultry-lice-and-mites-identification/>

Untreated mites will kill your bird, affect their feather quality for showing, and affect their ability to breed and lay. It is definitely in your best interest to watch for mites during your coop cleanings.

AVIAN QUIZ BOWL

In 2019, I had the opportunity to coach my daughter's team as they represented Wisconsin at the National Avian Quiz Bowl in Louisville, KY. Her team placed fourth. We also got to see the National American Livestock Expo that was part of the Bowl along with tours of Louisville, Churchill Downs, and the Louisville Slugger Bat factory.

So what is the Avian Bowl? It is a quiz competition all about poultry. However, to win, you don't have to know everything that there ever is to know about poultry. Every year, a few new sections of the manual are selected for studying.

Teams compete at the Wisconsin International Poultry Show in Portage, WI on Saturday, September 24th for the opportunity to represent Wisconsin nationally and to have fun. Teams consist of anywhere from 2-4 members. There are two divisions. The Junior division is for youth up to age 14 and they are awarded medals and bragging rights, and the Senior division which covers high school students. The winning team of the Senior division also wins medals and the opportunity to go to Louisville to represent

Wisconsin nationally.

If you think this is something that interests you, North Carolina has put together the study packet online and can be found here: <https://craven.ces.ncsu.edu/avian-bowl-2022/>

Topics studied will be:

- *past production hens
- *understanding food poisoners
- *avian systems — reproductive

*breeds, varieties, and strains (Mediterranean through AOSB)

*raising game birds

*eggyclopedia

*raising your home chicken flock

*biosecurity

*avian influenza

Watch for the opportunity to compete in the Avian Bowl at the Fair and win a prize. Play our Blooket to practice for the bowl!! <https://www.blooket.com/solo?id=61fd50ba7c78d4a9c35f5831>



Outagamie's junior team in 2018 featured Collin Schroeder, Jada & Collin Spiegel, and Jaiden Schroeder.

Poultry & Rabbit Fun Show

Wondering just how good those birds are? Which birds to bring to the fair? What can you do to improve your birds before the fair? The poultry & rabbit fun shows are the chance to find out.



Saturday, May 7, we will be having a poultry fun show. To enter in any of the contests that day, it will be \$5 at the door per youth participant or \$10 per family and the cost will pay for prizes and raise money for fair awards and the small animals project. There's no limit to how many birds you can enter in the fun show. Entries into the

poultry showmanship class will be divided into Junior, Intermediate, and Senior divisions.

Birds entered in the fun show or showmanship do need to be flock tested so if you did not get flock tested for the fair last year, you will need to have your birds tested in the parking lot before entry to the building. We will test each bird at a cost of \$1 each (max \$10 total) but will only test on that day birds that are being shown that day. If you have valid flock testing papers from last year, please bring them along.

We will also be hosting a bag raffle. All poultry members are requested to bring an item to donate for the raffle. This can either be dropped off at set-up on May 6th at 6 PM, brought to the homes of one of the Small Animals committee members (Karen Kuhn, Sarah Spiegel, Laurie Penterman, Dan Kuhn, Taia Littman, or

Beth Casper), or dropped off the morning of the show between 8-8:30 AM.

This doesn't have to cost anything! In the past donations have included free after rebate items from Menards, baked goods, and live animals. If it is an item that would sell for a decent amount at a rummage sale and is in good (near new) condition, we'll take it. We are not, however, Goodwill, so please don't send that well-loved stuffed rabbit from when you were five.

Other fun poultry related activities that day are the poultry photo contest and egg show. For the poultry photo contest, please submit your entries as 4X6 photos. They must be received by 10:00 that day to be judged at 10:30.

Lastly, the egg show will consist of these three categories: standard eggs (any color), bantam eggs (any color), and all other eggs. You can enter a half dozen eggs in each of the three categories. All eggs should be entered as six eggs of one kind. That means if you submit standard eggs, they will all be six of the same color—not one brown, one blue, and four white. The "all other" category includes eggs from any non-chicken species such as quail, guinea, turkey, pheasant, or duck.



Did you know?

A productive hen loses pigmentation in the following order: 1) Vent 2) Eye Ring 3) Ear Lobe 4) Beak 5) Bottom of Foot, 6) Shanks 7) Hocks & Top of Toes. When the bird molts, it regains its pigment in the reverse order (#7-#1).

Flock Testing

We will be doing flock testing on May 21st and June 11th at Karen Kuhn's from 9-11. All birds over four months of age must be tested at that time. This includes ALL poultry, not just the ones you plan on showing. If you haven't yet done so, make sure you get your premise ID from <https://wiid.org/premises-registration-renewal/>

Wisconsin State Fair

The Wisconsin State Fair isn't just cream puffs and food on a stick. It's another opportunity to show your birds! If you are 12 and up (as of January 1), you are eligible to show in the Wisconsin State Fair from August 10-12. You do not have to be nominated or selected on a county level as the State Fair poultry show is open to anyone who wants to participate.

Besides the birds being shown, there are opportunities to participate in showmanship, the poultry quiz, and communications competitions. Then, of course, there's the whole rest of the fair to check out when you aren't showing your birds.

Housing is available for the three day show at the Tommy Thompson Center which is located just up the hill from the Poultry Barn. More information will be available in late May. Find out more at <https://wistatefair.com/competitions/junior-poultry/>

Fond du Lac Swap

Looking for new birds to show this year? Have some to sell? The Fond du Lac Swap on Saturday, March 12 at the Fond du Lac fairgrounds is the largest swap and sale for small animals in the state. Breeders from all over Wisconsin and even from out of state bring their birds, rabbits, pigeons, ducks, geese, emus and even hamsters and mice for this bi-annual swap. The best stuff sells quickly, so it's recommended that you are there soon after it opens at 6:30. The swap does last until noon but many sellers will be gone by around 9 or 10, so don't wait too late.

Admission is \$5; 17 and under are free.



Let's Talk Turkey

Want to try something different for your poultry project this year? How about turkeys? Our fair has two opportunities for showing turkeys—in the commercial and show classes.

Turkeys are one of the only American Poultry Association classes where the entire class is made up of one breed (the Modern Game and the Guinea classes are the other two). Although there is only one breed accepted (the Turkey

breed), there are eight varieties—Beltsville Small White, White Holland, Slate, Royal Palm, Narragansett,

Bronze, Bourbon Red & Black. Slower growing than their commercial counterparts, they are gentle, friendly, and beautiful with tails that can spread much like their peacock cousins.

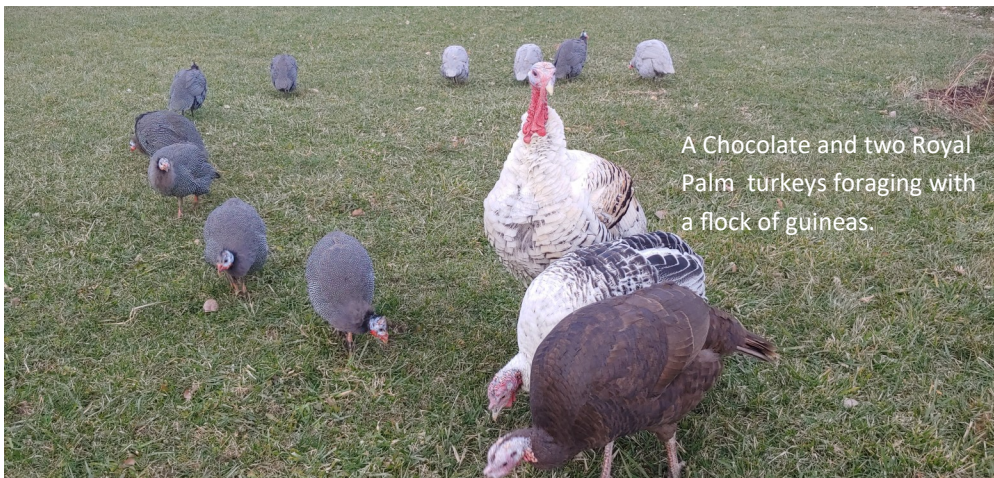
Commercial classes of turkey are generally dominated by the broad breasted white turkey. This is the industry standard when it comes to turkeys although you can find bronze breasted turkeys as well. They grow quickly, but are more likely

to suffer lameness (usually about 2-10% will have this issue) than the slower growing show turkeys. If you are growing them for the commercial classes, you might need to purchase more poults than expected to make up for lame birds.

It is recommended that all poults for exhibition or commercial classes are purchased around the last week of March.

medicated turkey feed is highly recommended.

Turkeys can get blackhead from chickens. The most common sign of blackhead is mustard-colored droppings. Your chickens may be carriers of blackhead and will never be affected by it. Turkeys, however, can easily die from blackhead. Besides medicated feed, keeping and growing turkeys separately from your chickens is recommended.



A Chocolate and two Royal Palm turkeys foraging with a flock of guineas.

Turkeys aren't tested for pullorum typhoid like chickens. Instead, when they are six months of age or older, they have to be tested for mycoplasma.

This enables turkeys to grow to a decent size for exhibition and sale.

All turkeys should be started on a turkey or gamebird starter. This starter may have up to 30% protein in it. This should be fed for about the first five weeks and then you can switch to a lower protein turkey and gamebird grower. Because turkeys have a greater tendency to be affected by protozoan infections such as blackhead,

This test costs \$20 and up and requires a blood draw. After the draw, you send in the sample to the state Vet lab. If you are mycoplasma positive, you will have to butcher your turkeys and will be unable to show them (but they can be eaten). This is why it is recommended that exhibitors show turkeys that are under six months of age.

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, May 7th from 8 am-2 pm
Outagamie Small Animals Fun Show & Showmanship Clinic;
Outagamie Fairgrounds

Saturday, May 21st at 9-11 am
PT Bird Testing @ Karen Kuhn's; N6560 County RD PP,
Black Creek, WI 54106

Wednesday, May 25th
Entries for the Outagamie County Fair close

Wednesday, May 25th at 7 PM
Entries for Wisconsin State Fair Close

Saturday, June 11th at 9-11 am
PT Bird Testing @ Karen Kuhn's; N6560 County RD PP,
Black Creek, WI 54106

July 19-July 24
Outagamie County Fair; Poultry entry day July 20 &
Poultry Judging day July 22

August 10-12
Wisconsin State Fair Poultry Show (Open to all youth
12-19 yrs old as of January 1st)

September 24
Avian Quiz Bowl; Columbia County Fairgrounds, Portage,
WI