



*Coming from Central Kentucky - land of horses, bourbon, and basketball - straight to your ears, Chickencoopguides.com presents AgriCast Digest; your place to get news and information about anything agriculturally related. Please welcome your host, Gabrielle Yoder!*

Welcome to the very first AgriCast Digest. I'd like to say thank you to those who are giving this a shot for the first time, as well as those podcasting pros who listen to podcasts on a regular basis. Whoever you are, thanks for listening.

I'll take a moment here to outline the schedule we have for the next several programs, which will air as often as listeners express the desire to have us record them, and if you have any comments, concerns, suggestions, or questions please make sure to go to the podcast main page and fill out the form there to tell us about it. We create content 100% to please our listeners so your voice is always important!

This session is going to be purely introductions and Q&A. We got a lot of questions that came in so it'll probably branch into a segment next week as well. Our current goal is to publish 2-4 podcasts a month filled with information that is valuable to you, the enthusiast. So if you want to talk about chicken poop, tell us (although I'll tell you we've already got a segment about chicken manure and soil amendments coming down the pipeline). If you want to hear about rabbits, sheep, horses, gardening, natural health, whatever and we've already received questions about it so keep sending them along.

If you want to talk about the latest celebrities and what part of their butt they had vacuumed recently then you're out of luck. Probably be one of the only things we won't be talking about here. But if Brad Pitt takes up alpaca farming any time soon, you can bet I'll be on it.

I will warn folks ahead of time: we aren't politically correct here at AgriCast Digest. I like to think back mentally to about 25 years ago when people weren't so worried about getting offended and suing each other. If you get really twisted about something we say then write to me. But be nice. I'll be fair with anyone who's fair with me and I respect all points of view when people present them rationally and respectfully. At a point in the future, we'd like to do live podcasts, but we need to test interest first. But one day, I hope to be able to take your questions live on the air.

I've probably spent enough time yammering about that, so let me introduce myself. My name is Gabrielle Yoder and I'm a chicken fanatic. (say in tone of AA meetings doing a confession) My husband and I are raising four kids in beautiful central Kentucky. We're originally from Florida and we'd never want to live anywhere else but here. The people are awesome, the local food and farm movement is huge, and the scenery is like something out of a picturebook. Florida had its pretty spots, but it was really overdeveloped. Covered in concrete. Kentucky tends to keep a lot more green areas and we like that. Not too much snow usually. Still officially in the South. Just about right even if they do put noodles in their chili here.

What else about me? I'm a mom to four kids, an herbalist, and local food enthusiast. I went to culinary school briefly, which only made me more of a food snob. We also homeschool so I'm frequently crazy and a big nerd. Love books and love learning, which I think is what made me the right person to do this.



And you know something great, folks? Even if you didn't relate to any of the things I said, just the fact that you came here to listen about chickens or rabbits or general agricultural topics tells me that we'll get along just fine.

Speaking of those topics, I have an entire bag of questions here from people like you who have contacted us recently. Let's knock a few of those out:

Teresa is concerned because a hen who recently molted is laying again, but her feathers aren't growing back.

Molting can take a long time, Teresa. A hard molt can be months, even up to 4-5 months if they lost everything. If they're laying eggs again that's a good sign. If you want your chicken's feathers to come back faster and you want a healthier hen overall, then up the protein content of the chicken feed. If you're feeding commercial then this is pretty simple. Just buy a bag of the higher protein stuff and feed her some for about a month. Or even easier, just mix some supplementals like peas and other high protein foods into the daily mix. Hand feeding just that hen is an option as well.

Next is Toni. She had a hen who sat on a clutch of 12 eggs, but walked away after a couple of them hatched and left the rest to die. She wants to know how long until her hen lays again.

I'm so sorry to hear that, Toni. It can be hard to watch potential life be snuffed out. Farm life isn't for the faint of heart, for sure. Unfortunately I have to say that all hens are different. They do seem to know instinctively when there's something wrong so my best guess is that the other eggs may have had something wrong with them. Again, I'm guessing. The hen could have just been a real bird brain and not up to sitting any more.

Next time, there's a couple of things you can do. Candling the eggs can help you determine the duds from the live eggs. This makes breakage and chick diseases less likely, too. If the hen hops up from the eggs when one or two hatch and you're sure that the rest are still alive, have an incubator standing by to pop them into. It might work. Or grab another broody hen and sneak them under her to hatch. Give them a couple of days and candle again to check on their progress. As long as you're right and they are live chicks then it'll come in time.

As for when that hen will lay again, it's about 2-3 weeks before broodies will start producing.

Last question on this introductory broadcast comes from Maureen. Maureen recently contacted us about vent gleet. She wants to know what the causes are and what you can do to help the problem. She also let us know that this problem had gone on for a couple of years and she hadn't had time to take care of it beyond the apple cider vinegar she gave them so I'll be getting into two things here.

First, I understand that raising chickens is hard. There are a million other things that might take priority in your mind, but I'd like to ask everyone now to take a look at things from the perspective of your chicken. You are, 90% of the time, continuing to domesticate an animal. This isn't a bad thing. Humans need animals. But what we also need to do is take care of them. Stewardship of those who depend on us is a big deal. Just like our children rely on us to feed and clothe them and make sure they're



well, it's the same for our animals. So the fact that these chickens had what is basically a really bad yeast infection for years bothers me.

I think Maureen did the best with what she had to work with and the knowledge she had, so I'm not jumping on her. But around the same time I read this I also read about several cases of animal neglect so I'm mentioning it together. I've seen farms where horse hooves have rotted off and the animal had to be shot. Dogs left to starve and die on a chain. Chickens crammed into cages together until their feet curled up. This is the kind of thing that that hypocritical organization PETA uses to bilk people out of their hard-earned money and if you live in a rural area, or have, then you've probably seen it at least once.

My point in all of this is that it's so easy to stop thinking of the animals in our care as beings deserving of respect and just a commodity. The buck you shoot and eat deserves a quick, clean death and for you to use every part of that animal you can. That old rooster you cull to toss in the soup pot deserves to have lived a life that was healthy, even if for no other reason than to be self-serving. Do you want to eat a diseased rooster? Is it really healthy to eat eggs from a chicken suffering vent gleet?

I'll leave you to think about that and come to your own conclusions. In the meantime, let's talk about vent gleet. It's pretty nasty. As I said earlier, it's essentially a yeast infection, which means there's a lack of balance in the chicken's life. This can come from many things.

It could be stress from barking dogs, excessively starchy food like corn or soy with too little access to fresh greens/herbs/bugs, lack of clean water, or just generally in bad health (sometimes from internal parasites). Check that the food you give them doesn't have added yeast. Many commercial brands that brag about the probiotics and whatever else they stick in there also add brewer's yeast or nutritional yeast and adding this to an already yeasty chicken is a bad idea.

The raw apple cider vinegar was a good start to help things along. Our advice to Maureen was to assess their diet, living conditions, and lifestyle as well. Everything should be clean and tidy with plenty of clean water and access to greens, etc. If they don't pasture or run on grass I'd start or this is going to keep happening. It's often necessary to move a run around to since chickens scratch up grass a lot and if that's not possible then to provide flats of sprouts. Just rotate them around and offer the sprouts at least twice a week.

Cut down on the corn, soy, and treats. Put probiotics in their food to help the gut rebalance. A little unsweetened yogurt will also help. Some molasses water once a day, just offer it for a few hours so they can drink it. It's also a good idea to catch and bathe the affected hens. I'd even suggest getting some geranium essential oil and add about 20 drops to a spray bottle of water. After you bathe them all, spray their vents a couple of times with the geranium water. Make sure to shake it first. Spray them down once or twice a day afterwards and it should help cut down any fungus or yeast that is still clinging on.

If you're not sure where to get this, sometimes a health food store or Whole Foods has it. Buying clubs, if you're part of one, frequently sell essential oils at discount prices. If you're still not sure about quality, since a lot of them are diluted and adulterated, then check out Mountain Rose Herbs. They've got the best quality on the net and I'll make sure there's an infolink for this on the podcast episode page.



Geranium oil is one of the best anti-fungal, anti-yeast, and anti-bacterial agents I've ever found. I make a powder from equal parts arrowroot powder and white kaolin clay and add some geranium oil before shaking it up in a bag and smushing it with my fingers to work the oil drops in, about 20 does it. Put that in a shaker and it's great for human and animal needs. Best baby powder on the planet. My kid's diaper rashes have disappeared literally in hours. We've dusted chicken butts with it, too. Works a treat. I'll post the recipe on the episode page, too.

But for now we have to say goodbye. Get those questions in to us! If you go to the podcast main page, [chickencoopguides.com/podcast](http://chickencoopguides.com/podcast), then you'll see a brief web form where you can submit your comments and questions for future episodes. While you're there, please fill out the poll we have up to tell us what your preferred publishing day, frequency, and even program length is. Now on the podcast page, you'll also have access to a load of other goodies like the private AgriCast Digest facebook page, archives, transcripts, and whatever freebies and trial offers we dig up. If I mention an infolink during the broadcast, no worries about writing it down because it'll be there under the episode page. You don't even have to take notes because we're transcribing every broadcast.

Again, thanks for listening and God bless!

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