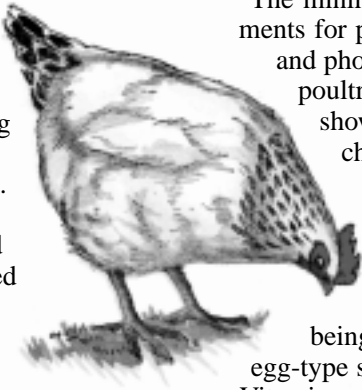


Feeding the home flock

Poultry feeds are referred to as "complete" feeds because they contain all the protein, energy, vitamins, minerals and other nutrients necessary for proper growth, egg production and health of the birds. Feeding any other ingredients, mixed with the feed or fed separately, upsets the balance of nutrients in the "complete" feed. Feeding additional grain or supplement with the complete poultry feed is not recommended.



of age. When they begin egg production, feed them a "layer" ration until egg production ends.

The minimum requirements for protein, calcium and phosphorus in poultry feeds are shown. Remember, chickens saved for egg production are fed pullet-type diets, not broiler diets, regardless of being from broiler or egg-type stock.

Vitamins are always added to poultry feed in higher amounts than are needed. This ensures the chickens eat plenty

Minimum requirements	Protein %	Calcium %	Phosphorus %
Broilers (6 weeks to market)	10	0.8	0.5
Pullets (8 to 20 weeks)	14	0.8	0.5
Laying Hens	16	3.0	0.5

of vitamins for proper health. Higher levels usually are not harmful, but extra vitamins are unnecessary and expensive.

Layer feeds are fed only to laying hens. Hens require higher levels of minerals (calcium for eggshell formation) than chicks. Layer feed, fed to chicks, will reduce growth and place unnecessary stress on chicks.

Poultry feeds are available with several types of medications for preventing or treating diseases. Coccidiostats and/or antibiotics are the two most common medications added to

feed. Follow the recommended medication withdrawal periods before eating meat or eggs from the treated birds. Follow all warning instructions listed on the feed label.

Many people overlook the importance of providing clean, fresh water to their flocks. Water, though not often considered a nutrient, is the most important nutrient for animals. Chickens, as all farm animals, need clean water at all times. Drinking water must not get too hot or cold, or chickens will not drink it. Clean the water troughs and replace with fresh water at least once daily.

You must keep water and feed troughs clean of droppings, litter, soil and other contaminants. Keep feed troughs clean and dry. Place the trough so the feed stays dry. Empty the feed troughs at least two or three times weekly (daily if necessary) and refill with dry, fresh feed. Do not wash feed troughs unless they are contaminated with harmful residues or unless the feed gets wet. Do not let the feed become moldy. Moldy feed can kill chickens. (DJ)

Shaping evergreen trees

Shaping evergreen or conifer trees can give them a fuller, balanced look, while helping correct certain growing problems. It's important, though, to know tree varieties to trim at the right time of year.

When shaping, follow the tree's natural lines. Don't try to force it into a predetermined shape; trees, like people, come in a variety of sizes and forms. Before shaping, prune any dead or damaged branches. Shaping is normally done on the current season's growth. Trim back individual shoots with clean

cuts. Shaping techniques vary slightly among coniferous species. Junipers, cedars, spruces and firs can be trimmed anytime, although the dormant time between October 1 and April 1 is ideal. When trimming, leave a bud at the end of the branch so foliage will grow from that point.

Pines are a little different as they produce a cluster of buds at the end of the season's growth. Because of that, pines should be trimmed from mid-May to mid-July. If trimmed too early, too

many buds will set. If trimmed too late, few, if any buds, may set for the next year's growth. Any regular pair of pruning shears or a special shearing knife can be used to trim evergreens. However, using unclean cutting equipment can spread infection from tree to tree. Avoid infection by dipping equipment in a bleach solution to kill any spores.

A successful shaping job can make an evergreen tree a much more attractive part of the landscape. (DJ)

To have or not to have—that is the sumac dilemma



Smooth sumac is a native deciduous shrub found throughout Nebraska that forms dense thickets from widely spreading roots. Trees and other shrubs readily establish in aging sumac thickets, accelerating the conversion of grassland to woodland. Small amounts of smooth sumac may be desirable because it provides wildlife habitat and food and has attractive fall

foliage, but too much of a good thing can be a problem.

Unlike many woody species, smooth sumac is not controlled by fire. It resprouts vigorously after defoliation, drawing on abundant energy reserves stored in the extensive root system. Improper grazing promotes the spread of thickets because new stems sprouting at the peripheries of thickets can out-compete the grazed grasses.

Cutting and mowing is an ineffective means of controlling sumac unless repeated treatments over many years are used to control abundant resprouts. The sharp stumps, resulting from cutting, are another drawback and may be a hazard to animals or vehicle tires.

Like cutting, prescribed burning is ineffective. Single spring fires can result in nearly 100 percent top kill of stems, but vigorous resprouting can lead to stem densities higher than those before the fire.

Many herbicides are very effective against smooth sumac. They can be applied to the foliage, stem bases or to the soil. Approved herbicides include 2,4-D, Crossbow, Spike, Tordon and Velpar. The herbicide 2,4-D LV4 ester, provides excellent low-cost control. Apply 2,4-D LV4 ester at 2 quarts per acre when sumac is flowering in mid-to late June. Sumac thickets should be monitored and stems surviving after one year should be spot treated with 2,4-D. (DJ)

Acreage Insights



Tractor safety tips (part 6)

Tractors are one of the most important pieces of equipment on a farm, yet they are also among the most dangerous. More deaths are caused by tractors than by any other type of farm accident. It is, therefore, imperative that tractor owners routinely check their tractors and keep in mind the following safety guidelines:



Tractor speeds should match surface conditions. Rough or uneven surfaces require reduced speeds. Be alert for rocks, holes, embankments or other hazards that can change the tractor's center of gravity.

When working on a sloped surface, use a tractor with a wide front-end and space the rear wheels as far apart as possible. Cross slopes slowly and keep side-mounted equipment on the uphill side of the tractor.

Lock brake pedals together when driving at transport speeds to ensure even braking. Shift to a lower gear before traveling downhill to let the engine and transmission reduce speeds. Be sure that any loads are not going to try and outrun the tractor on the way down a hill. To avoid having a load outrun the tractor, never pull a load heavier than the tractor can safely handle under any conditions that may be encountered. Remember, two trips may take longer, but it is better than never completing the job. (DJ)

Horse Information Available on the Web.

The Lancaster County Extension Web pages contain links to a wealth of information on many subjects. Within the Nebraska Production Ag section of the Ag & Acreage pages, horse owners will find many useful links to Extension Publications regarding horses. From the main horse page, the user is taken directly to a complete listing of NebGuides that discuss: Care & Feeding, Breeding, and Insects and Parasites.

The site also goes beyond Nebraska to other land grant universities that provide extensive horse-related information. There are links to the Horse Fact Sheets published by the University of Kentucky, Horse Publications from Oklahoma State University.

In addition to the Extension Publications, one will find a link to the Oklahoma State Livestock Virtual Library - with links to both public and private information sources worldwide.

There is also a link to Oklahoma State Breeds of Livestock - Horses where one finds an alphabetical listing of every breed of horse, each with color photos and a description.

Finally, there are two links to non-extension databases that contain many sound links and expert advice. These are The Horseman's Advisor, and the International Equine Resource Center.

One can go to the horse page either by starting with the Ag - Acreage Page at www.lanco.unl.edu/ag/. Clicking on the Nebraska Production Ag icon, then on the Livestock button, and then on Horse; or one can go directly to the Horse page by typing the following address into your web browser netsite field: <http://www.ianr.unl.edu/ianr/lanco/ag/livestok/horse.htm>. <TD>

Learn at your convenience

—24 hours a day, 7 days a week—

NUFACTS (audio) Information Center

NUFACTS audio message center offers fast, convenient information. In the Lincoln area call 441-7188; for the rest of Nebraska call 1-800-832-5441. When directed, enter the 3-digit number of the message you wish to hear.

Acreage & Small Farm Insights Web Site

Visit our Internet web site at: <http://www.ianr.unl.edu/ianr/dodge/acreage/index.htm> to learn about Extension programs, publications and links to other acreage and small farm information.

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