

Lucky Hens Rescue

Crop Help Sheet

What Is The Crop

The Hen's crop is located right beneath the neck against the breast and just right of the centre. When a chicken eats, the food goes into the crop which extends to accommodate the food, especially with young chicks, this can be easily seen protruding after the hen has eaten.

Symptoms Of Sour Crop

- Quite sleepy and sometimes hunched hen
- Large crop full of fluid, that does not disappear overnight
- Sometimes diarrhoea
- Lack of appetite

Causes Of Sour Crop

Sour crop is caused when the crop doesn't empty fully overnight and as a result the food ferments within the crop causing a fungal infection. You can identify Sour Crop by checking the crop before the hen eats in the morning, if it is Sour Crop, the crop will be watery and squishy like a balloon. If you open the hen's beak, a foul smell will emanate from it.

Treating Sour Crop In Hens

One option to treat sour crop if it develops is to help your chicken to "vomit" (this is not a procedure that should NOT be done in a careless manner as it could be very dangerous to the hen and could lead to rotten fluid ending up in the chickens lungs) You should start by wrapping your hen in a towel and lean the bird forward so her head is close to the ground and gently massage the crop from bottom to top towards her mouth (this should be done for no longer than 10-15 seconds) until fluid is released. Repeat this a couple of times then allow the hen to rest. If need be repeat in two days time.

DO NOT OVER DO THIS PROCEDURE!

Once this has been done and the hen has rested, mix some natural (Live) yogurt into the layers pellets or mash and feed this to the hen along with water mixed with Apple Cider Vinegar (If she isn't drinking, you can administer the water with a syringe making sure it's only a few drops at a time and the liquid is inserted well past the hole at the base of her tongue that leads to her lungs allowing her to swallow in between)

In the event that the problem persists, you must then seek a vets advice as a course of anti-fungal medicine may be required.

Avoiding Crop Problems

In order to avoid crop problems you should make sure that along with pellets there is an ample supply of poultry grit for the hens. The grit breaks up the food in the crop and without it the food cannot be broken down and the digested, the calcium in the grit also benefits laying hens. Long Grass should be cut down as this can compact in the crop (as can hard treats) and stodgy food such as bread and pasta should be fed sparingly as treats as these can also cause a compaction in the crop.

Causes Of Impacted (Or Bound) Crop

Impacted crop (crop bound) is similar in cause to Sour crop in that the crop does not empty over night but in the morning it will feel hard and swollen, like a golf ball. In both cases the hen is likely to seem lethargic, will lose weight and may make strange head movements due to the discomfort of the crop.

Treating Impacted Or Bound Crop In Hens

If you suspect your hen has an impacted crop, start treatment in the morning by dropping a small amount of olive oil or liquid paraffin (2-3ml) mixed with water into the hen's mouth making sure you insert the liquid past the hole at the base of her tongue which leads to her lungs, and then gently massage the crop in a downward motion to help break up the compaction and repeat this in the afternoon. Keep the hen separate to ensure she has passed any blockage.

Make sure your hen has access to fresh water at all times with ACV added. When you feel your hen is ready to eat, start by feeding soft food such as layer mash and add natural Live Yogurt to soften the food and neutralise and bacterial build in the crop.

It may take a couple of days to break up the compaction, but if it persists for 3 days we advise you see a vet.

IF YOU SUSPECT INFECTION GO STRAIGHT TO THE VETS FOR TREATMENT.

Before you print think about the ENVIRONMENT!