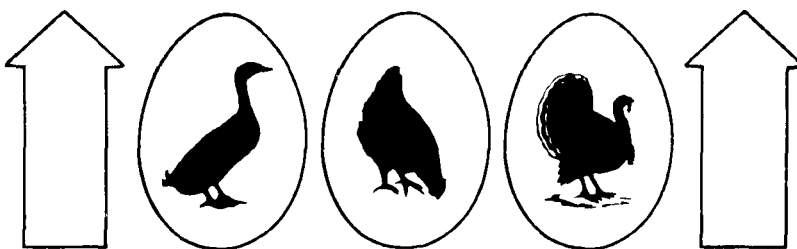


# Poultry Facts



PFS 23

## POULTRY PESTS AND THEIR CONTROL

adapted from Arthur L. Antonelli, Extension Entomologist  
and Daniel K. Andrews, Extension Poultry Scientist  
Washington State University

Mites, lice, and fleas are the most common pests of poultry in West Virginia. Infested birds have scaly scabby skin and discolored or ragged feathers. They also lose many feathers.

The chart below gives recommendations for control with insecticides. Well-planned and constructed poultry houses and good sanitation make control easier.

### POULTRY MITES

Chicken Mite. During the daytime these mites stay in cracks, crevices, and other protected places. At night they crawl upon the birds to feed. Their only food is the blood of the birds they infest.

Since these mites rarely stay on the birds during the daytime, a flock may be badly run down without the owner being aware of the cause of the trouble. In cases of heavy infestations, the birds become droopy, pale about the head, and listless. They may stop laying.

Northern Fowl (Feather) Mite. This mite resembles the chicken mite, but it breeds among the feathers and spends its entire life on the bird. The presence of the mites is often first noticed on the eggs. Mite eggs and excrement will be found among the feathers, especially about the tail.

These mites cause annoyance, loss of blood, and unthriftiness in infested birds. English sparrows are also usually infested with these mites. Destroying their nests around poultry houses is suggested.

Depluming Mite. This mite lives at the base of the feathers. It appears to produce an intense itching, causing the birds to pull out their feathers. If the stumps of the feathers are examined soon after the quill is broken, they will be found to be surrounded by scales and crusts. These mites become active in the spring and usually disappear in winter.

Scaly Leg Mite. This form of itch mite causes a condition known as scaly leg. While it usually occurs only on the legs, the mite may attack the combs and wattles. The infestation is easy to recognize by the enlargement of the feet and legs and their rough appearance. In severe cases, the joints become inflamed and the birds become lame.

#### POULTRY LICE

Lice on poultry do not suck blood but feed by nibbling or chewing dry skin, scales, feathers, or scabs on the skin. Several kinds of lice attack birds in West Virginia. Some of the most important are the chicken body louse, the shaft louse, and the chicken head louse.

Chicken Body Louse. This louse lives most of the time on the skin, mainly in the areas around the vent and under the wings. It is common on both young and old birds.

Shaft Louse. The shaft louse, or common body louse, is similar to the chicken body louse but smaller and paler colored. It is common around the vent as well as on the back and breast. It tends to cling to the feathers rather than to the skin of the bird. This louse does not infest young chickens.

Chicken Head Louse. This louse is a problem mostly on young birds. It occurs on the head at the base of the feathers or down. It passes from one chicken to another by contact.

#### FLEAS

Several kinds of fleas may occasionally infest birds.

#### DARKLING GROUND BEETLE

The "mealworm" stage of this beetle occasionally burrows into the flesh and internal organs of dead or dying baby chicks. The chicks are not attacked after they reach two or three weeks of age. This insect has also been shown capable of transmitting leucosis in broilers.

Full-grown larvae are brown banded, sausage shaped, more pointed at one end, and about 3/16 inch long. The adult beetles are the same length and brown-black in color.

POULTRY PEST CONTROL CHART

<u>Insect</u>	<u>Use any one of the listed materials</u>	<u>Application</u>	<u>Remark</u>
Chicken mite, northern fowl mite, lice	1. Malathion spray (4 tbsp. 57% emulsifiable liquid or 5 oz. 25% wettable powder per gallon of water)	Apply liberally to walls, ceilings, roosts, nests, and adjacent areas. Force spray into all cracks and crevices. Replace nesting material after spraying.	Avoid contaminating feed, feeding troughs or water fountains.
	2. Malathion dust (4 or 5% dust)	Use 1 lb. of dust per 50-60 sq. ft. of litter and floor space and nests, roosts, and adjacent areas. Or, use 1 lb. of dust per 100 birds. Make thorough application directly to birds with rotary hand or puff duster.	Avoid contaminating feed, feeding troughs, or water fountains. Repeat in 4-8 weeks or when needed.
	3. Nicotine sulfate roost paint (40% nicotine solution)	Use 1 pt. per 150 linear feet. Paint roosts thoroughly.	Do not apply on birds or while birds are in house.
	4. Sevin dust (5% dust)	Use 1 lb. per 100 birds. Dust birds thoroughly.	Repeat in 4 wks. if needed. Do not apply within 7 days of slaughter.
	5. Sevin spray (2 lbs. 50% wettable powder in 25 gals. of water)	Apply 1-2 gal. per 1000 sq. ft. of surface in and around poultry houses. Spray thoroughly.	Do not apply to birds.
	6. Permethrin (5.7%, 10%, or 11% spray; 0.25% dust)	Follow manufacturer's label instructions. Available trade names include Ectiban, Anchor Permethrin II, Atroban, and Overtime.	Ensure thorough treatment of vent area.

POULTRY PEST CONTROL CHART (continued)

Insect	Use any one of the listed materials	Application	Remarks
	7.Rabon (50% WP)	Spray vent and fluff areas with high pressure equipment at a rate of 1 gal. per 100 birds. Use 0.5% spray-see label.	Treat thoroughly, but repeat no more often than every two weeks if necessary.
	8.Rabon (50% WP)	Paint brush or hand spray 1 pt. per 100 ft. of roost. Stir occasionally and apply thoroughly. Use 1.0% spray-see label.	
Depluming mite	1.Sulfur dust	Cover neck, abdomen, and underwing feathers thoroughly.	
Scaly leg mite	1.Crude oil or crank-case oil	Apply to feet and lower legs with a paint brush or by dipping.	Do not get oil on flesh or feathers. Repeat treatment within month if distorted scales have not been shed.
Lice only	1.Malathion roost paint (2-7 oz. 57% EC per gal. of water)	Use 1 pt. per 150 linear feet of roost.	
	2.Sulfur dust	Cover birds thoroughly.	
	3.Nicotine sulfate roost paint (40% nicotine solution)	Use 1 pt. per 150 linear feet. Paint roosts thoroughly.	Do not apply on birds or while birds are in house.
Fleas	1.Malathion spray (4 tbsp. 57% emulsifiable liquid or 5 oz. 25% wetttable powder per gal of water).	Apply liberally to base of walls, roosts, nests, floors, and adjacent ground areas. Replace nesting material after spraying.	Avoid contaminating feed, feeding troughs or water fountains.

POULTRY PEST CONTROL CHART (continued)

Insect	Use any one of the listed materials	Application	Remarks
	2. Malathion dust (4 or 5% dust)	Apply 1 lb. of dust per 50-60 sq. ft. of litter, floor area, and to roosts, nests, and adjacent areas. Also apply to birds at rate of 1 lb. per 100 birds.	Avoid contaminating feed, feeding troughs or water fountains. Repeat treatment in 4-8 weeks or sooner if necessary.
Darkling ground beetle (lesser mealworm)	1. Sevin spray (2 lb. 50% wettable powder per 25 gal. of water).	Spot spray where beetles are congregated. Or, spray 1-2 gal. per 1000 sq. ft. of wall, litter, or roost surface.	Beetles often crowd under feeders or other objects lying slightly buried in the litter. Move feeders where necessary. Avoid contamination of feeding and watering troughs, nests, and eggs. Ventilate while spraying. Do not use within 7 days of slaughter.

Use pesticides with care. Apply them only to plants, animals, or sites listed on the label. When mixing and applying pesticides, follow all label precautions to protect yourself and others around you. It is a violation of the law to disregard label directions. If pesticides are spilled on skin or clothing, remove clothing and wash skin thoroughly. Store pesticides in their original containers and keep them out of the reach of children, pets, and livestock.

The law requires that pesticides be used as the label directs. Uses against pests not named on the label and low application rates are permissible exceptions. If there is any apparent conflict between label directions and the pesticide uses suggested in this publication, consult your County Extension Agent. Trade names are not mentioned as an endorsement by the WVU Extension Service, but merely as an example of available compound.