

Fitting for Shows
Submitted by: Ross Hunt

Show time is here at last. When the show team is finally selected, it is time to put your potential young Champion into their training program. Remember the coop training article in the last Bulletin. Coop training is a very important part of their training. Also remember a breeder that shows a flighty and untrained bird should not expect to win the top spot. You can breed your birds to be docile as it is a trait as is being flighty that can be inherited.

Young Giant Homers that have what it takes to become Champion are special and stand out right at the beginning of their training. The breeders that use genetics in their programs have the advantage of knowing their young birds, the pairs they are from and the potential for them to perform. If genetics are applied right, there will be pairs that you can say "the birds that this pair produces this year, with some being better than others, all of them will be good". That kind of results is genetics at work. Genetics spelled another way is the consistency both in the breeding pens and the show halls of the A.G.H.A.

Training time- Part of these potential young Champions is in the grow pens. As John Hammond said in Jurassic Park- "Spare No Expense"! You must give these young birds anything and everything they may want. They may want extra peas, wheat, milo, popcorn and the list goes on depending on what your feed program calls for.

Pro-Bios is maybe the most important supplement you can give your young birds as it gets their gut in top shape to digest all they will be given to get them in the best of shape. Pro-Bios at the rate of one tablespoon per gallon of water once a week is good. Here at H & H, we give Pro-Bios at this rate year-round to both old and young birds. A Brewers yeast pill down the throat during coop training is a good topping to the Pro-Bios. Red Cell vitamins at one tablespoon per gallon of water combined with one tablespoon of Calcium Gluconate in the mixture is a good vitamin program.

Stress is a major problem for young Giant Homers during their travels around the show circuit. One of the most helpful mixtures is electrolytes and one tablespoon of elderberry concentrate (we use Sambucol) per gallon. Given several days before the shows, during the shows and several days after the shows makes a difference.

Now here is the tricky part. Show birds are athletes in training, preparing them to peak right at show time is a feat in itself. It can be done but is not easy by a long shot. They can peak a week before the show and then go backwards right at show time. That's where genetics can lend some degree of support, if your birds are bred for superior bodies, which Giant Homers should be, that can possibly carry them through. Do try to peak your birds as it is huge, but it is not easy and you have to work at it, but is worth it if it works. Champion Giant Homers will cross many hurdles on their way to becoming Champion and need all the support you can give them. We hope you raise that CHAMPION!!!

TIP OF THE QUARTER

"Going light" is a really bad problem all of us have had to deal with. The vast majority of birds do not recover from this and die. We have a Blue Check hen that placed high in her class at the Futurity in 2017 and was an excellent producer of some good birds in 2018. I had her in the old hen pen and after some time noticed she was sort of stand-offish. I picked her up, she wasn't that bad of shape. I figured she was getting beat off of the feed trough by another old hen. I moved her to another old hen pen with more room. After a week or so she caught my eye. I picked her up and she was in terrible shape. It was time to act! I immediately moved her to an individual pen gave her 15cc of straight Calcium Gluconate down the throat and a Brewers yeast pill. I repeated that the second day. Her water was two tablespoons Calcium Gluconate per gallon of water. Her feed was topped with popcorn. I set up the water and feed jugs so I could tell if she was eating and drinking. The next day, I could tell. Today she is on the mend and doing quite well. She should be ready for the up-coming breeding season. If this problem of "going light" will affect her production, only time will tell.

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