

## Transitioning Your Flock to Their New Home

Thank you for choosing Whiting Farms Hatchery! Your hens are about to begin a wonderful new chapter filled with sunshine, dust baths, and freedom. Transitioning from their controlled hatchery environment to your farm will be stressful for them. Providing thoughtful care is essential to help them adjust and maintain egg production.

At first, your hens might not know how to navigate ramps, roosts, or nesting boxes. They could huddle together in unfamiliar spots as they adapt to their new surroundings. With some patience and attention, they'll settle into their new routine beautifully. Here's how to give them the best start:

### **Lighting: Key to Egg Production**

Egg production is hugely dependent on light. Without proper lighting, most hens (especially those from a controlled environment already receiving 14 hours/day of light) will stop laying during the shorter days of winter. Light signals their bodies to produce eggs, and without enough of it, their reproductive systems shut down entirely.

To ensure consistent laying, provide 14-16 hours of warm spectrum (~3,000K) light daily. Install a timer to maintain a consistent schedule, turning the light on early in the morning and off in the evening. Place the light where it illuminates the coop evenly, including nesting boxes and roosts. A 40-60 watt soft white LED bulb is sufficient for a small coop. Larger coops may need multiple bulbs.

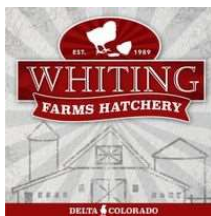
**Keep a light on all day in the coop!** Your birds will not want to go outside immediately, and if they hang out in a dark coop all day they will not get enough light to stimulate laying. Lights also guide hens into the coop at night, making it easier for them to learn to roost indoors.

For a deeper dive on lighting, read: [Understanding poultry lighting](#). This online [Lighting Calculator](#) is also useful for making sure you get enough light (lux) in your coop.

### **Feed: Fuel for Egg Production**

Hens require a high-energy diet to maintain egg production, especially during stressful transitions. Egg production takes enormous energy, and without enough calories, hens will stop laying. Today's high production layers have very specific nutritional requirements and must be fed a formulated layer ration to survive and thrive.

Provide a 16-18% protein layer ration with balanced nutrients. Whiting Farms hens are accustomed to fine ground mash and may take time to adjust to pellets. We highly recommend making a wet mash for the first week or so to stimulate appetite. Make sure



feed is easily accessible inside the coop if you are extending lighting so they can eat more hours of the day. Chickens regulate their body temperature by eating. Without enough calories, a hens body will prioritize survival over laying eggs.

### **Water: Essential for Egg Production**

Even a single day without water will stop egg production for weeks. Always provide clean, fresh water in easily accessible locations. Whiting Farms hens are trained to use nipple waterers, but open water sources also work well.

In colder months, prevent freezing by using heated waterers or checking water frequently. In hot weather, ensure water stays cool and shaded.

### **Shelter: Comfortable and Safe**

One of the trickier parts of your transition is the controlled environment they are raised in. Your hens are used to a consistent 75°F environment, so extreme cold or heat can stress them and halt egg production. A properly insulated coop helps regulate temperature. In winter, you may consider using safe coop heater panels (**not heat lamps, which are major fire hazards**). A heated coop isn't necessary for egg production, but it will offset feed consumption. However, avoid overheating the coop to prevent shock during power outages. In summer, provide ample shade and ventilation to keep your flock comfortable.

Your chickens will be unfamiliar with roosts at first. Some will immediately take to them, others may need to be “trained” by being placed on their roosts at night for a few days.

### **Winter and Stress Checklist**

To keep your hens laying through the transition and winter, make sure to:

- Provide 14-16 hours of warm light daily.
- Use 16-18% protein feed and ensure they're eating enough. Transition pellets into mash if needed.
- Ensure clean, unfrozen water is available at all times.
- Provide a well-insulated coop with safe heating options in winter and shade in summer.

### **Final Thoughts**

Your new hens will take a few weeks to adjust, but with good food, clean water, a cozy shelter, and proper lighting, they'll thrive in their new environment. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to us.