

# INTRODUCING New Birds to Your Flock

It's that time of year when breeders have lots of new stock to sell, offering the opportunity to replenish your flock, or even expand it.

Introducing new birds can be difficult and stressful for all concerned, here Clare Taylor (aka The Chicken Whisperer) describes how, by observing a few simple rules, stress can be minimised for both your existing flock and the new birds.

## Ensure you buy birds of a similar size to your existing flock

Don't try to introduce 10-week-old chicks to fully grown hybrids and remember 'point of lay' birds will be around 16-20 weeks old.

## Set up some separate isolation housing and a run for the new birds

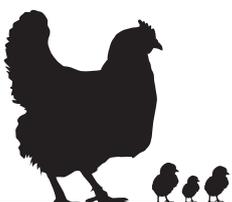
A borrowed coop, spare rabbit hutch and run, or even a large dog crate can suffice. Ensure the housing has sleeping quarters with roosting bars, a nest box and a run with feeders and drinkers.

Clean the housing thoroughly before introducing any new birds and reduce the potential for mite and louse infestation by using Total **Mite Ready to Use spray** and then powder with **Buz Busters Louse Powder** before adding bedding to the housing and topping up the feeders and drinkers. Check that all the catches and fastenings are secure and that the run has a clear waterproof cover



## Check all new birds over before buying

Ensure that they are free from lice and mites, are breathing freely and look lively and inquisitive.



**NET TEX**



01283 524222 [info@net-tex.co.uk](mailto:info@net-tex.co.uk)  
[nettexpoultry.com](http://nettexpoultry.com)



### **Allow time for familiarisation**

New birds may be nervous and unsettled with re-homing so aim to keep them quiet by placing them straight into the separate isolation housing keeping the door shut so that lighting levels are low. Birds will remain calmer in subdued lighting so allowing an hour before you let them into the run with the food and water will prove beneficial.

B vitamins are integral to birds' nervous systems so use of a product like **Vit Boost** will deliver B vitamins including biotin which can be an aid to alleviating the stress linked to moving birds.

### **Avoid mixing old and new birds for a minimum of one week**

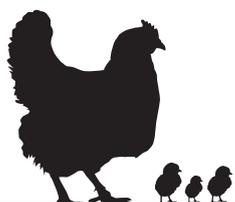
This will act as a quarantine period for any illness which may be present and allow you to treat new birds for lice and worms before they are integrated with the existing flock. Additionally, new birds can establish their homing instinct so as, and when, they do eventually free range, they know where to go back to.

### **If possible keep birds separate for around two weeks**

Once birds have had time to integrate and familiarise with each other through the run mesh allow some supervised free ranging time, with extra food and water stations to reduce bullying. As the familiarisation process progresses allow them to roost in the same housing as your existing flock at night – introduce new birds to the roost approximately an hour after your existing flock and aim to open the coop earlier than usual the following morning to reduce the potential for conflict at that time as well - be prepared to separate them again for a while if there is any animosity.



The main rule of new bird introductions is to do it gradually, allowing time for adjustment to both new surroundings and new flock mates. Ensure housing is thoroughly cleaned and dry before they arrive and consider which products you could use to help support both new, and existing birds through a potentially unsettling and stressful time.



**NET TEX**



**01283 524222 info@net-tex.co.uk**  
**nettexpoultry.com**