

Feeding Young Jersey Giants

There is a lot of talk about what feed to start little Giants out on to give them a jumpstart to grow big. Everyone has their own favorite formulas that they swear by. What's someone new to raising Giants to do? Well the following excerpts are from old newsletters where the grande dame of Jersey Giants, Golda Miller discusses her ideas.

May, 1980 – Please folks DON'T push those Giants too fast...give them time to grow that strong body and those strong legs...they will put on the weight later and fast but let them grow that strong frame first...Charlene Beane says again...she got some Cornish broilers (we did also). At one week old they were bigger than Giants at 2 weeks old...I know...and at 8 weeks of age...my broilers are from 5 to 7 pounds...7 pounds in 8 weeks??? No, my Giants sure are not that heavy and I sure don't want them to be...these broilers even though they have very big legs and feet...they just can't walk...they just wobble...sit down all the time...(right by the whey blocks)...eat all the time...Giants and Cornish Cross broilers all in the same pen...the Giants are all out ranging...finding bugs, greens, etc. Building muscle and that big frame, good and strong...but wait in a few months and see which is the largest and best...WELL, the broilers are mostly all butchered anyhow. That is what they are for...Giants are not a frying chicken...but for roasts...can't be beat!! A 10 or 12 pound roast for Thanksgiving...my kids won't settle for any turkey.

January, 1988 – I start them out as early as they come from the incubator...with commercial baby chick crumbles and water. You will be surprised how much a day old baby chick will eat...and (in 2 days, it will be much bigger than a chick that hasn't been fed) it is a very good idea to also have a mixture of 10 pounds of finely cracked corn, ¼ lb. of charcoal, 1 lb. chick grit their second day and for a few days, sprinkle this mixture over the crumbles. If you have any chicks with a little diarrhea from getting a little hot or too cold...this will take care of it...the charcoal is sweetening or something to the intestines and the corn and grit helps with the constipation. The charcoal is very hard for me to get and I don't always have it to feed but it is very good if you can get this mixture.

When the chicks are 3 or 4 weeks old, I start feeding a little grain in the evenings...they love grain and let you know they expect it every evening...for the grain I mix cracked corn, put in some sorghum milo, and some wheat...(nothing cracked except the corn). In about 6 weeks I start feeding commercial grower along with the mixed grains, also feed whole oats free choice. Oats provide bulk that helps to keep them from wanting to eat feathers. I continue with this feeding in the evenings until they are about 8 weeks old when I start feeding both grain and mash free choice. In the summertime when they are out on the range...they eat much more grain than mash...and they grow like weeds.

For mash...we have a 20% protein formula using our own grains with a supplement, to make the 20% formula...with minerals that we get from the vet...adding the minerals when we have our feed ground and made up at the elevator. We have our own grain so why buy expensive crumbles etc...why not feed whole grain also...why feed expensive cracked grains...I don't believe in feeding cracked feeds to grown or growing Giants

I think that most folks push these GIANTS too fast with high powered feeds. They mature before they get that big frame built...you have to build the frame first, and then put weight on. At 6 months of age the cockerels will weigh 10 pounds but not be ready for the shows. Some of the pullets will start laying at 5 months which is too early...the later maturing ones get the largest.

Note that Mrs. Miller was on a farm in Kansas and adapted her rations to what she had available and was the most economical in her circumstances. Lets hear from some of you good members and share your ideas on what works for you. What is available and needed to survive in cold northern Minnesota is probably different from southern Florida.