**Stick Fast Fleas(written by Liz Compagnoni)**

Stick fast fleas are one of those unwanted things that appear in your poultry runs from time to time, they suck all the goodness out of your birds, jump on your legs etc as you walk thru your pens biting humans as well.

Where they come from

They can be bought in on new poultry in form of fleas stuck to their skin that you don’t notice when purchasing. They then multiply very quickly.

Mice and Rats can bring them into your yards.

Wild doves etc…. are also carriers.

How to eliminate them

There is no quick fix, you have to routinely treat your birds and yards weekly to stop the cycle.

Fleas lay their eggs in the soil, hatch and jump on your birds, feed, breed and start the whole cycle over again.

There is products that will help you eliminate them but you will need to use these in combination over a long period of time.

Treating your birds only does NOT fix the problem. There will be eggs in the soil that will hatch and jump back on your birds the following week.

First job to help eliminate fleas.

Remove all hay from your runs.(sand or sawdust only used in nest boxes etc) Concrete in pens can help as well.

Second Job to help eliminate fleas.

**Major rodent baiting** and trapping programme. Use bait stations (Ratex is good in these) it has a high margin so chooks can eat dieing rats and mice without getting sick.

Leave bait stations permanently in your poultry runs topping them up regularly, so you can control all rodents in area.

**Third Job to help eliminate fleas**

Diatomaceous Earth. Spread and rake thru pen area into bedding. Put handfuls into nest boxes with sawdust. This product works well in dry area’s. It is a natural product that dries out eggs in litter so they can not hatch. This takes time, so not an instant fix. When ever you clean put more DE in with fresh sawdust , sand etc… also put DE into places where poultry are sand bathing.

This product is also a good maintenance product even if you are not having problems. Add a bit to bedding each time you clean out your pens. Prevention is better then the cure.

**Fourth Job to help eliminate fleas**

Maldison comes in different brand names and strengths. Maldison is strongest strength one you can buy(also registered for use in poultry with no with-holding period on eating eggs), malawash and malaban(not registered) , just to name a few others.

Mix this as per instructions and spray your pens from top to bottom also spraying any outside areas your poultry may sit when free ranging. You can even spray your birds.

**Fifth Job to help eliminate fleas**

You can spray birds to kill fleas on them(with Maldison). Or you can take more organic approach of catching each bird and smothering their combs and wattles with Vaseline or lard, which will suffocate any fleas on the birds. Killing fleas on the bird is the EASIEST part of the process. THE PROBLEM IS STOPPING THEM GETTING REINFECTED.

There is no need to use harsh chemicals on the birds themselves, I’ve heard people using dog and cat flea spot on treatments etc.. but there could be some unknown health problem with these years down the line, because they are not meant to be used in situations where people eat eggs and meat from these birds. Also when treating birds you are not solving the problem unless for fix the environment they are living in.

The only way to get rid of these critters is treating environment and birds routinely every week. STOP THE CYCLE Using a combination of Diatomaceous Earth and Maldison and removing the carriers of these fleas such as mice and rats etc….