

Reasons Hens Stop Laying

Any factors can affect egg production, with health (before and after lay) being one of the most significant. If your hens stop laying, you may be able to identify the source of the problem by asking the following questions:

- ⚡ **Have the hens been laying for 10 months or more?** Your hens may just be at the end of their laying cycle. If so, they will stop production, go through a molt (loss of feathers), take a break, and start laying again. If your hens have been laying for less than 10 months, something else may be causing their lack of production.
- ⚡ **Are the hens receiving enough fresh, clean water?** The hens will not eat if they cannot drink, so make sure that your watering system is functioning correctly. Keeping a watering system operational can be a challenge in the winter when the water may freeze. You can purchase waterers that have heaters attached to keep the water from freezing. Otherwise, you will have to break up any frozen water on a regular basis. Problems can occur in summer as well. Summertime high temperatures can make the water so warm that the chickens will not drink enough to meet their increased needs. For more information, refer to the related article on the [water requirements of poultry](#).
- ⚡ **Are the hens eating enough of the right feed?** Feeding the wrong feed, diluting feed with scratch grains, or limiting the amount of feed available can result in your hens having a nutritional deficiency, causing them to molt and go out of production. When hens have a nutritional deficiency, it is common to see feather pecking as well as a loss of egg production.
- ⚡ **Are the hens getting enough hours of light per day?** Decreases in the number of hours of light per day typically will put a flock out of production. For this reason, many flocks that are not provided with supplemental light go out of production during the fall and winter months.
- ⚡ **Do the hens have parasites?** Various [internal parasites](#) and [external parasites](#) can infest poultry flocks and stress the hens. Heavy infestations of internal parasites can result in serious damage to the digestive tract and reduce hen performance. Heavy infestations of mites can cause anemia in the hens, also adversely affecting their performance.
- ⚡ **Did any issues with eggshell quality precede the stop in egg production?** Several [diseases](#) can result in abnormal eggshells.
- ⚡ **Have there been any health issues within the flock?** A flock that has been sick will not perform as well as a flock that has not gone through a [disease](#) challenge.