

About Happy Chicken Farm Eggs

The Farm: The Happy Chicken Farm is located at 1474 Wain Rd. in North Saanich. This is where Joan, Vincent, and their son Robert have lived for about 15 years. About 10 years ago we started keeping chickens as a hobby to supply ourselves with eggs and meat. That hobby has gradually grown until we usually have 50-75 laying hens and are still expanding to keep up with the demand! We also raise about 250 meat chickens a year.

The Chickens: We use commercial breeds of egg laying chickens, either Hyline/ISA Browns or Red Rocks. We get them as day old chicks, usually twice a year, and hand raise them to adulthood. We do not beak trim the chicks or subject them to any other inhumane treatment. Now that it is legal in Victoria, if you would like to keep a few hens in your back yard give us a call and we will raise some ready to lay hens for you. We keep the chickens in a number of small (~15 hen) flocks and we try to keep a rooster with each flock so the chickens can establish a normal flock relationship.

The Feed: We support Vancouver Island farmers by buying our chicken feed from the "Top Shelf" feed mill in Duncan. In conversation with them we have learned that they source ingredients as locally as possible, many from Island farmers and they do not source any ingredients from China. We start the day old chicks on 20% protein nonmedicated crumble and when they are about 10 weeks old, transition them to 16% protein layer pellets. The pellets contain no genetically modified ingredients. The non GMO feed is about 30% more expensive than the standard feed and this is the reason why we charge a bit more for our eggs than some others. We do not feed medications or artificially added hormones to our chickens at any time.

The Method: We use a version of the "Chicken Tractor" system detailed in the book "Chicken Tractor" by Andy Lee and Pat Foreman. We found that typical chicken tractor designs were not well adapted to the Vancouver Island climate so we designed our own that takes into account our damp cool winters and warm dry summers. "Chicken tractors" are shelters that protect the chickens from weather and predators while giving them access to grass through the open bottom so they can scratch around and eat the grass, dirt, and bugs and take dust baths as chickens like to do. Our shelters are 10' X 12' and on wheels so we can easily move them to a new patch of grass every day. As a bonus, if one of the shelters is not being used for chickens it makes a nifty small greenhouse! Chickens kept using this method are commonly referred to as "pastured poultry" as compared to "free run" or "free range". During the summer, if we have a flock of mature layers that have a rooster who shows good flock protection qualities we sometimes open the door and let the birds forage during the day on our 3 acre field and visit the neighbors if they wish! See the top of the next page for a photo of our prototype chicken tractor, appropriately named the "Eggsperiment". If you would like to learn more about our custom designed chicken tractors and egg production methods give us a call at 250-656-0365.



The Eggs: We collect the eggs 2 or 3 times a day and then hand wash them in plain warm water to remove any dirt. This also removes the “bloom” which will cause the eggs to age more rapidly, but the eggs are usually sold and eaten so quickly that this is not a concern. They are then immediately placed in cartons and refrigerated. The eggs are not disinfected in chlorine, nor are they dipped in mineral oil or sodium silicate (waterglass). The eggs are ungraded so the sizes in a carton will vary and some of the shells may have pimples, ripples, or other oddities. We do offer a 100% money back guarantee so if you ever have a complaint about a Happy Chicken Farm egg give us a call and we will work something out. Since we do have roosters with each flock of hens the eggs may be fertile, though they won't hatch after being refrigerated. If you would like to experiment with hatching eggs give us a call and we will save some unrefrigerated eggs for you.

The Cartons: In order to reduce waste we use egg cartons multiple times. This means that any information on the carton that is not on the “Happy Chicken Farm” label should be disregarded. When we sell you eggs we will write your name on the carton and would appreciate you bringing it back for refilling!

How to Buy: We sell our eggs year round at the farm gate (1474 Wain Rd.) Check our roadside sign or give us a call (250-656-0365) or email (vsullivan@shaw.ca) to see if we have stock. If we don't, we can put you on our list for the next available eggs. We fully support the North Saanich Farm Market but usually don't have enough eggs to bring any to the market. Hopefully we can increase production sufficiently in 2011 to bring eggs to the market on a regular basis.

Take care and eat well!

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