Bird Health Checklist

SMALL FLOCKS COLLABORATIVE

Daily Checks

Check your birds daily for these key signs. Use this list to spot problems early and protect your flock.

1 Behavior + Activity

- ☐ Birds are alert and moving around normally
- ☐ Birds are pecking, scratching, and socializing
- ☐ No signs of tiredness, isolation, limping or reluctantance to move around

2 Breathing + Nose

- ☐ Breathing sounds normal – no wheezing, coughing, sneezing, or gurgling
- ☐ Nostrils are clean and free of discharge or crust
- ☐ No birds are having difficulty breathing

3 Eyes, Comb, Wattles

- ☐ Eyes are bright, clear, and open
- ☐ Combs and wattles are red and not pale, shriveled, or swollen
- ☐ No signs of frostbite or excessive swelling

4 Feathers + Skin

- ☐ Feathers are clean, smooth, and full
- ☐ No signs of feather pecking or wounds
- ☐ No lice or mites – check vent and under wings
- ☐ Skin is not irritated, raw, bald, or constantly scratched

5 Eating, Drinking, Droppings

- ☐ Birds are eating and drinking normally
- ☐ No sudden weight loss or changes in appetite
- ☐ Droppings are firm with white caps
- ☐ No watery, bloody, foamy, or discolored waste

Weekly Checks

In addition to daily checks, give your birds a gentle hands-on exam once a week. Completing this weekly, helps identify health issues that are less obvious, such as weight loss, foot problems, or laying issues.

- ☐ Feel the breast (keel) for healthy body condition
- ☐ Check vent for swelling, mites, lice or lice eggs, redness, or fecal staining
- ☐ Abdomen feels soft – not swollen or hard
- ☐ Feet and legs are free of scabs, crusty scales, or swelling
- ☐ Coop is dry, clean, and pest-free
- ☐ Ventilation is good with no drafts or ammonia smells

To prevent disease spread in your flock:

Separate sick birds to protect the flock

Handle healthy birds first: young → adults → sick birds

Do not share tools between sick and healthy birds

Wash hands and boots or avoid returning to the coop

Clean the coop and monitor the whole flock

Keep your distance. Germs can spread through air, dust, and fomites

Call a vet or poultry expert for medical information

Report sudden deaths or unusual illness to your vet or state

Find more at
www.healthybirds.info