

# Loft Management

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I really don't like writing so I will keep this simple. Through the years I have found the following a way to manage my loft and keep it simple. I have also learned that things vary for other guys and their lofts, especially in other parts of the country. Keep this in mind and discuss this with fellow members as well as visit their lofts, this is what "it's all about".

An easy way to keep track of your schedule is to have a calendar called "year at a glance", showing all the months. Hang it in your feed room or close to the pen so you can make notes of laying/hatching, medicating and show schedules you want to track. I'm not a huge believer in medicating all the time but there are some periodic ones to be considered, here are my suggestions:

- Ivomec (wormer) – 3 to 4 times a year... December, April, September
- Piperazine or Tramisol (wormer for pin or what is called round worm, Ivomec does NOT treat this worm) – same as Ivomec (a week later). The birds really don't like the taste but be sure they have to drink it. There are other worms to treat roundworm and you can consider those as an alternative treatment as well.
- 4-in1 broad antibiotic. I would recommend 4 times a year, January, April, July, October
- Respiratory and More – I'm going to try this monthly this year for my birds. Be sure there is about a week on plain water before using at the preventive dosage level.
- Tamed iodine – add to drinking water monthly to aid in hatchability of babies from the eggs.
- Red Cell – liquid horse vitamin that can be added to water twice a month.
- Baytril – antibiotic pill to treat birds when you see a sudden illness of a valuable bird you want to save. I have heard this pill is no longer available. I would talk to Foy's to see if have an alternative medication.
- Cypro - this is a water soluble antibiotic that very strong to treat the entire loft. Sometimes when you bring birds home from a show they have been exposed to some really bad viruses that can wipe out all the birds. This is your "last resort treatment" to save the birds.
- Spartix tablets – this treat canker, I have found that birds can have "internal canker" that is not directly apparent. 4 in 1 should take care of this but this can be used in an individual case if needed.
- Poultry dust or Scalex – treat birds for lice and mites
- First aid cream – if a bird gets scalped you can apply to help prevent infection.
- Sulfa powder – use under bedding for the entire loft to prevent pests

Other loft supplies would include

- Mothballs – hanging in a nylon stocking to help repel mice, insects, it also smells good.
- Wooden eggs – having a couple when you want to move eggs to a feeder pair early and not break the cycle of laying
- Scissors – trimming bird feathers
- Large syringe – applying water (electrolyte) to birds before and after going to show to reduce stress. Also using when a bird becomes suddenly ill. Birds drop weight quickly when taken out of the normal environment or become sick. Since I've been doing this I have not had any ill affects for birds returning from shows.
- Thermometer – I like to have this in the loft to monitor temperature
- Timer for lights – It's a good idea for breeding season to use artificial light to have a total light time of 12 hours a day. This helps promote mating and production.
- Small pad of paper and pencil - making notes of birds that you want to record for the computer records.

- Post a printout in pen for mating's – another easy way to record production, band numbers, date hatched, color, etc. You will find this extremely valuable if you don't have a photographic memory.
- Bands – make a wire and hook hung in the loft to make it easy accessible for banding of birds. Make sure it's on a hook that won't let it fall off.
- Bleach – non-scented to sterilizing water containers weekly. A cap full for a gallon and rinsing thoroughly can instantly disinfect the containers.
- Feeder – preferably covered to prevent birds from dirtying the feed
- Grit and pullet oyster shell containers – I like the hopper style for ease of use
- Loft scrapper – I use a 5-6 inch wide "putty knife". It's a good idea to file the edge several times a year to help scrapping.
- Loft rake – I like the flexible leaf rake, there is also one that is expandable tines that works well. I use this as a weekly raking of pigeon waste that doesn't disturbing the bedding much..
- Shop vac – easy way to clean feed room and pickup feathers
- Potato brush – use this to clean water containers
- Old antenna – I've used these as a judging stick as well as lifting the birds off of eggs and not disturbing them with my hand ... works great.
- Heater – NEVER use the "coil toaster" type (high fire risk) ... I like the electric base board heats that have a built in thermostat. Mount this several feet off the floor to avoid feathers and if mount directly in loft be sure birds can not perch on it. The "internal" contacts on the thermostat needs to be periodically cleaned due to pigeon dust ... any heater needs this.
- Cabinets – try to pick up a wall and base cabinet/top from someone who is remodeling their kitchen or laundry room. This is where you can keep you supplies
- Barrels and 5 gal buckets with lids – this is where you can keep the open feed and grit. It is a great way to keep mice out and have clean feed.
- Fish net – I use this to catch birds easy. Even though I have a bad back it seems the birds are less stressed if caught this way
- Pine needles – I use this for bedding for nests
- Nest boxes or bowls – I like the 11 to 12 inch square boxes with 5 to 6 inch sides. This gives room for bedding as well as keeps youngsters from crawling out of the box.
- Small water/feed containers – I have the kind that hook on the nest fronts. This is a great way to feed birds when mating as well weaning babies early in the nest boxes
- Water Fountains – I have the metal hooded type. They do rust after a couple of years but I just get new ones. They won't crack if they get frozen.
- Mouse traps – I like the box kind that catches them live. Once you have one caught others seem to come to investigate so you get more.
- Show pen – keep this for isolating sick birds or doing your show room training. I like to have the "standard for the AGHA" framed by it for reference.

Feed – I'll leave this subject for a different article. Just suffice to say I use a breeder/conditioner grain all year long with supplements for show conditioning.

Just one added item I didn't mention that certainly isn't required but I really like it in my loft, I have a tuner and speakers so I can listen to music (mostly country radio) while I am working in the loft - I really enjoy this!