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GEESE INFORMATION SHEET

GENERAL INFORMATION: This information sheet is provided only as a starting point for raising mallards. It is highly recommended that you read multiple articles from the Internet to include:

- **Raising Geese: The Basics:** <http://www.motherearthnews.com/homesteading-and-livestock/keeping-geese-ze0z10zhir.aspx#axzz3DokS7OK0>

Brown Chinese geese can live up to 20 years. Geese mature at a much faster pace than chickens generally laying their first eggs the Spring of their first year. Chinese geese are among the easiest domesticated birds to raise and maintain.

1. **CHINESE GOSLINGS:** Young Chinese goslings have a low mortality rate but should be carefully cared for until they reach 6-9 weeks old; this include adequate heat, protection from drafts and the elements, and a clean environment.
2. **FEEDING GOSLINGS:** Personally, I feed goslings unmedicated 20% chick starter until they are 2 weeks old and then 18% chick grower thereafter. Many say that regular medicated chick starter poisons small goslings, but this old tale is no longer true concerning feeds that use Amprolium. CAUTION: feeding goslings higher protein feeds can result in an abnormal twisting of one or more wing (Angel Wing).
3. **FEEDING ADULTS:** Personally, I feed adult birds 17% chicken laying pellets. Geese can develop a condition called "angel wing" or become over weight if they are consistently feed a high protein or high calorie diet.
4. **HEAT:** Like chickens, young goslings require a draft free environment with supplemental heat during the first five-weeks of their life. Generally, you should start day-old poults off at 90° F for the first week dropping the temperature 5° each week until the poults are 5 weeks old (90, 85, 80, 75, 70). Be sure that there is sufficient room in the brooder for the poults to escape the heat if they become overheated.
5. **BEDDING:** Like chickens, slippery bedding such as slick newspaper can cause spraddle legs and should be avoided. The use of wood shavings as brooder bedding is not generally recommended as goslings are excessively messy and love to play in their water. Personally, I raise young goslings on ½ inch hardware cloth placed over removable, cleanable trays.
6. **WATER:** In order to wash down their food, goslings need to be able to dip their entire bill in water; however, their water dish should not be so deep or so wide as to permit them to play in the water. When raised by their mother, a goslings coats their soft down with water repellant oil by rubbing against their mother. Goslings raised in a brooder are not water proof and can easily become chilled or drown if permitted to swim or play in water. Therefore, goslings should not be exposed to a swimming area until they are completely feathered.
7. **PLACING WITH MATURE GEESE:** Brown Chinese geese are superb parents and will adopt very young goslings as their own. When mixing adults and juveniles be sure that there is sufficient room for the juveniles to run and hide should the adults show aggression. It is advisable that you only mix adults and juveniles when you have several hours to supervise their behavior. To date, I have had no negative experiences mixing geese of different ages.
8. **HOUSING:** Geese do well in a small amount of space or in shared space with chickens; however, they prefer larger open space that contains bushes, brush, or other natural cover areas. They do love the water but do not require a pond to mate. Geese do not require sophisticated shelter but should have protection from cold winter wind (such as a dog house or brush pile) and shaded area during the summer heat. Most of my adult geese prefer to spend their nights outside even during the coldest of East Texas nights.
9. **FLIGHT:** Brown Chinese geese are not capable of extended flight. Although my geese will run flapping their wings as if they are about to take off in flight, I have not observed them leaving the ground.
10. **NOISE:** Brown Chinese geese make excellent watch dogs, are protective of their territory, and are very loud. Make no mistake, Brown Chinese geese will raise quite a ruckus if someone/something enters their turf or the surrounding area.
11. **PREDATORS:** Unfortunately, customers frequently report that their goslings have been killed by dogs, wild animals, and occasionally snakes. To avoid such calamities, you should consider building a predator proof pen near your pond. Adults are sufficiently assertive enough to ward off most predators.
12. **GENDER:** Brown Chinese geese are exceptional difficult to sex. Male Chinese geese are typically larger with a proportionally longer bill and neck. A male's knob above his bill will be about twice as large as a female's. The male will also have a high and shrill honk that sounds like a long double syllable, resembling the sound "steeee-ill." The female will have a deeper honk, which is shorter and sounds like "hoink." Additionally, a female goose's "bottom" – the area between her legs – will hang much lower than a gander's although this doesn't become noticeable until after she has started laying eggs.

HUMAN SALMONELLA INFECTIONS FROM BABY POULTRY: Baby poultry can carry harmful germs called Salmonella. After you touch a chick, duckling, or other baby bird, or anything in the area where they live and roam, WASH YOUR HANDS so you don't get sick!

ANGEL WING IN DUCKS & GEESE

by Metzger Farms

Angel wing, also known as slipped wing, crooked wing or drooped wing, is a condition of ducks and geese where the last joint of the wing is twisted and the wing feathers point out, and do not lay smooth against the body.

It is more common in geese and typically in either the left wing or both wings, only rarely in the right wing only. Males develop it more than females. The birds that develop the problem are perfectly healthy, they are just not as beautiful.

Because of the discussions I have heard over the years on the cause of angel wing, I did a search for all research on the subject. The best article was one written by Janet Kear, who is the Senior Scientific Officer of The Wildlife Trust in Great Britain. Some of the researchers feel the condition is genetic, but others have proven it is not. Because she works with waterfowl from many parts of the world, Ms. Kear has come to the conclusion that it is a nutritional problem due to excess feed.

She has found that waterfowl that normally mature in the Arctic environment do not show any angel wing because of their naturally fast growth. It does appear, however, in those species that come from a more temperate environment where they grow slower under natural feeding conditions. But by feeding them unlimited, high protein, high energy feed, they grow unnaturally fast and their wing weight seems to outgrow the strength of the wing to support it. Further proof of this is from another article that said "If their wings start drooping they are put on a diet of alfalfa pellets (instead of Chick Growena) until the condition clears up."

The only wild waterfowl populations known to be affected are those fed by man. In Sweden, ten different park populations of Canada geese produced angel wing. The following year one flock was not fed any artificial feed and there were no angel wing goslings produced.

Ms. Kear's suggestions are to not feed high protein, high energy feed (such as turkey feed), provide plenty of room for exercise, keep in small groups, provide plenty of grass or green feed and keep the pen dark at night if possible so less eating occurs. If you do notice a twisted wing, however, you can form a sling to hold the wing in place to allow proper development.

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