**A Basic/General Keep**

Found this keep and asked permission to use it.  
  
I find it very helpful and very practical. Very simple, straightforward and well written. Hopefully it can help you in your chicken endeavors.  
  
**How to prepare your gamefowl for battle:**  
*Reproduced with permission from the author, Don Blansett.* I got hold of Mr. Blansett through our member [realmccoy](http://www.sabong.net.ph/forum/member.php?u=62357" \t "_blank) Thank you realmccoy!  
  
The sport of cockfighting has existed for hundreds of years, but like most sciences, more progress has been made in the past fifty than all those preceding years. The average cocks of today could defeat those cocks bred and fed in the 1920's. Why? For the same reasons human beings today are stronger, bigger and faster than their grandparents: breeding and feeding. Great strides have been made in genetics and nutrition in the past fifty, and particularly, the last twenty years. Consequently, average life expectancy, general health, and size have increased by leaps and bounds. In the animal world horses run faster, cows produce more milk and beef, hens lay more eggs, and so on.  
  
Cockers of today are more knowledgeable and generally better educated, with more available information, than ever before. But, while most cockers are great students of experience, as a rule, they do little to actually study genetics and nutrition with an eye toward improving the ability and performance of their fowl. This conditioning method is an attempt to enable many cockers to "catch up" with the latest scientific developments in nutrition and training. The research, the studying, and the experimentation have been done for you. This keep can work for you.  
  
I have read dozens of keeps, and while I have not seen one written in the last ten years that would actually be detrimental to your fowl, most have been fairly similar as to feed and work. You will find that this keep is different in its approach, than any you have ever used. To be successful, you must follow this keep closely, in quantity of feed and work, and in type of feed and timing.  
  
This conditioning method is based on the latest studies concerning athletic competition, and what are cocks except athletes? The principle behind it is known as "carbohydrate loading". To understand fully how this keep works, you should know a little about nutrition and its effects. So you can understand the ideas involved, I will try to simplify them.  
  
The amount of energy that a muscle will be able to produce depends on the amount of "glycogen" stored in that muscle. Glycogen is a chemical that serves as fuel for the muscle. The more glycogen present in the muscle, the longer that muscle will be able to act effectively. Studies have shown that if glycogen stores are depleted by exercise and a low carbohydrate diet, then replaced by rest and a high carbohydrate diet, the muscle can store twice as much glycogen, or energy, as it had originally. No one needs to tell you what this means in practical terms: your cock will hit harder, and more importantly, will be able to do it much longer than he would have otherwise. He will maintain that deadly punch for a greater period of time. I will explain about carbohydrates, proteins and fats in more detail when we get to the subject of feed.  
  
Finally, let me say that this is the closest thing to a workingman's keep that you can find. It does not require 12 hours a day to be effective. The maximum time needed would be I to 2 hours in the morning and the same in the evening. The quantity of the time spent with your show of cocks is not as important as the quality of the time. Make sure that your time is well organized and efficient. This keep does require good cocks in good health cocks that are well bred and have been fed and cared for properly all their lives. There is no keep, and especially, no substance, that will make up for lack of care. So if you bought this keep because you have been lazy your cocks are in poor health from lack of care then you cannot expect this conditioning method, or any other, to do them any good.  
  
Pre-Keep? What's That?  
  
My feeling on this subject is that our cocks should be in a pre-keep all their lives well fed, but at approximate fighting weights, worm free and deloused. I hope you don't have cocks that are any other way. I have fought cocks off strings, out of fly pens and out of holding pens with no appreciable difference in performance when this keep is used for the last fourteen days. The important thing to remember is that fowl are like people, in that they become bored with the same surroundings. Whenever possible, rotate cocks on a regular basis from fly pens to holding pens to string walks. This will keep the cocks active and alert and prevent them from becoming coop-stale. Handle your cocks often, except in moulting season, to tame them and to determine their weights so that their feed rations can be adjusted accordingly.  
  
I cannot overemphasize the fact that you should put up only those cocks that are gentle and well mannered. Life is too short to fool with manfighters besides, it is my belief that most manfighters are not truly game. However, don't confuse manfighters with nervous, high-strung fowl. Also, many otherwise gentle cocks will hit back if mishandled or when they are becoming sharp during the keep. Like boxers, cocks in training love to snap a few punches at an available target. In summary, just let me say that if a cock doesn't gentle down, doesn't stop hitting or pecking when picked up, after a week's gentle handling, don't consider him for a keep. Kill him, breed him (if you are a fool), but don't put him up to fight.  
  
Since I am on the subject, I'll attempt to give you a good all around feed routine, as well as a worming and delousing schedule. Your daily feed for fowl on your yard should consist of approximately 55% carbohydrates, 15% protein, and 30% fat. Since most laying mash is 12% to 15% protein, you will need to supplement the protein, unless you use the 20 to 30% protein lay pellets offered by some feed stores. A good all-around feed, and one that is as cheap as possible without sacrificing quality, is one part scratch (which consists of cracked corn and wheat), one part 20% laying pellets and one part soaked oats. For those cockers in the less temperate areas, substitute whole corn for scratch in the winter. Sure, you can buy more expensive feeds, but for a good sound all-purpose feed, this mixture can't be beaten. As for supplementing protein, in moderation, you can use "trout chow", fish meal, or even some high protein dog food such as Gaines. But always remember use these in moderation. Because, after all, you are feeding chickens, and the closer you stay to a natural diet, the better off you will be. A lot of fancy feeds will just upset a fowl's digestion. The opinions on amounts and times of feeds would fill a book much larger than this. Adjust your feed in accordance with the weight of the cock. Whether you feed once or twice daily depends on so many variables, I wouldn't even begin to try to dictate to you climate, types of pens, breeds of fowl. Go with what works best for you. One hint though, if you have rather severe winters, make sure your cocks are fed as close to dark as possible, the more corn the better, if this is a second feed. It has been my experience that a cock with a full crop can stand those cold nights much better than one that is empty.  
  
As for worming and delousing get on a regular schedule. If you have string walks, change the leg bands every Saturday or Sunday or whatever, just do it regularly. The same goes for worming and delousing. Fowl should be wormed and deloused every month. In fact, I often delouse and worm any time I have an occasion to catch one of my fowl running loose on the yard. Any number of good products are available for getting rid of lice. Several are advertised in your gamefowl journals and I have heard good comments about most all of them. Most farm and feed stores carry a brand of lice powder. I know some cockers who use Black Leaf 40 to delouse, often with a chemical dip, but I don't advise this. I know of one prominent cocker who completely submerged all his battle cocks in a delousing solution way over 100 of them. By the time he had finished the last one, he looked back, and the first ones were beginning to fall over. He lost every single treated cock that day, and although he is beginning to win again this year, it took him three years to regain his previous position. So I don't recommend dips, nor do I recommend Black Leaf 40 for the amateur.  
  
The only worm medicine I can recommend is the Wormal product from Salsbury Laboratories. If you follow directions on the bottle, Piperzine liquid wormer is okay too, especially for young fowl. But remember, Piperzine only kills one type of worm, the roundworm, while Wormal will kill three types of worms, including the roundworm. Don't be misled by sensational claims in the gamefowl journals advertising a revolutionary new worm medicine. If a more effective worm medicine had been discovered, believe me, the commercial poultry men would be using it. They're using Wormal, and so am I. Some worms hatch on 10-day cycles, so to be safe, worm on Saturday, and then 10 days later. After that, follow your monthly schedule to control worms. Just remember that worms, like lice, can never be completely eliminated, just controlled.  
  
Vitamins: Myth or Magic?  
  
The truth about the effects of vitamins actually lies somewhere in between. I have had to rethink my position on vitamins recently. Three years ago, I, along with most scientists, doctors and nutritionists, felt that all the vitamins a person needed were contained in a well-balanced diet. 'Using vitamin and mineral supplements was just paying for expensive urine, the body's way of discarding unneeded vitamins. However, today most experts agree that extra vitamins can play an important role in any serious training program, as long as massive doses are not used. It is quite possible to die from overdoses of vitamins vitamin D, for example. Certain vitamins such as C and B-12 are water soluble, which means that the body does not absorb what it doesn't need, and one cannot receive an overdose from these vitamins. So, in conclusion, let me say that although vitamins and their effects are still not completely understood, it is clear that cocks under the physical strain of intensive conditioning can benefit from an extra vitamin and mineral supplement, such as we advise in this program.  
  
Water, Water, Everywhere ...  
  
Every keep I have ever read mentions drying cocks out before they fight by limiting their water intake. Some of the directions are moderate and some are radical. Cockers thirty or forty years ago often gave their cocks no water for the last two days! In to-, day's fast-paced competition, I know of no surer way to get them killed. Cocks need moisture in their bodies to convert glycogen to energy. Exactly how much water a cock needs is determined by so many factors it is impossible to predict with any certainty but I will say this, give your cocks all the water they will drink during the keep. Believe me, the cocks are better judges of what they need than we are. In fact, in extremely cold weather, you may want to encourage cocks to drink by giving them warm water or warm water mixed with powdered milk. Always keep water by your cocks during the keep, up until 24 hours or so before the fight, when you want to regulate every bit of their feed and water intake. Consider this fact: when a cock loses 2% of his body weight in water, his ability to perform begins to deteriorate. In other words, he is riot fighting up to his potential. Two percent of a 5 pound cock's weight is 1.6 ounces, a little over one and a half ounces. SO, if you bring a cock into a fight with all the moisture he needs in his tissues, he has a much better chance. And that, my friend, is the name of the game.  
  
When pressed, most cockers will describe a cock on point" as a bundle of nerves, bobbing, clucking, moving a cocked gun. I define a cock on point as being a cock that is ready and at the peak of his health, strength and well-being. For years, I have corresponded with a prominent cocker who has continually pressed this idea on me: "Fight your cocks when they are ready, not when you are." This means taking cocks to the pit when they are at the peak of their mental and physical well-being.  
  
"Pointing" is a natural thing. It is the end result of several contributing factors: the cock is empty, he has been rested force rested, and he is sexually and physically frustrated from inactivity. As a result of all these factors, his blood sugar level is way up, his energy is at its peak and he is not only ready, he's anxious for an outlet, he wants to fight. Often a cock "on point" is described as "corky" to describe a cock that is light and bobs like a cork on water. There is really no way to describe a cock on point but I guarantee you'll know it when you feel him. This is not something to be taught, it must be experienced.  
  
Sparring  
  
Sparring can be a valuable tool for the cocker if done properly. First, it is a tool for selection it allows the cocker to get some idea of how a cock will fight. Secondly, a cock can learn some things during the course of a session, good habits as well as bad. Thirdly, sparring can be a valuable outlet for a cock's pent-up energy, allowing him to vent his rage and delay his coming on point too early.  
  
Some cockers use a catch cock and attempt to "teach" a cock to hit at a cock's tail even if he can't see his head. Also, some cockers tie a catch cock's legs to see if he will score on a down cock. I am doubtful if either of these practices does the slightest bit of good, because I think the aggressiveness of the cock is determined in the brood pen.  
  
However, cocks, to a certain degree, can be taught to score quickly. This is the way. First, bill your cocks really well, flush them and set them down close together, close enough so they'll get at one another very fast. Let them have a good pitting, enough to make them really mad, but don't let them wallow and break feathers. After a 15 second rest, flush them and set them down about three feet apart. Now, here is the important part: when the cocks break, catch them immediately. Then without rest, set them down 5 feet apart, let them break and catch them. This time set them down 8 feet apart, let them break and catch them. Set them down again 8 feet apart and this time let them mix it up good. The purpose of this type of sparring is simple: the cocks will begin to score more quickly and break higher. Also, you are not giving them enough time to get tired and start ducking. If you let cocks spar until they are very tired, they will learn to duck really quickly, and this habit must be avoided.  
  
Work  
  
To attain maximum condition, a cock must be worked, and worked hard. Not all this work should be forced work, or hand-work-most of it should, in fact, be natural work, the kind a cock will do in a good fly pen with litter. He will scratch and fly up and down many times a day, complementing the handwork you give him. I feel that it is impossible to get a cock "muscle-bound" as some keeps would allow you to believe. It is quite possible to make a cock sore and stiff by overwork. That is why this method allows a cock to "rest up" from his conditioning program two full days before his fight. This "rest" period serves several purposes. First, if the cock has sore or stiff muscles, this time allows those muscles to regain their original elasticity, yet retain the strength that has been developed. Secondly, blood sugar begins to rise with the decrease in work, beginning the pointing process. Thirdly, it allows for the glycogen content in the muscles to increase.  
  
Some cocks will not be able to take the work of this conditioning program. That in itself should give you some idea as to whether your cocks are really quality fowl. It has been my experience that truly well bred cocks won't fold under the pressure of the work. Rather, they will rebound and thrive on such activity, eager to work.  
  
While realizing that volumes could be written on this subject alone, I think that it is sufficiently important to touch on at least the major points. In fact, I believe that the majority of 3-1 and 4-1 derby scores that you see can be attributed to the lack of attention that most cockers pay to this chore. After all, your derby show is only as good as your worst cock. If you approach the selection of your derby show with the attitude that "Well, this cock isn't so good, but maybe I'll get lucky and meet another weak cock," then you might as well stay at home. Always select the best cocks you have to condition. Your first step in selecting is to examine the overall health of the cock. Eyes should be bright, feathers slick and oily, and he should just give off an impression of active vitality. Examine feet and legs for sores or bumbles, the breastbone for sores, and the mouth and head for blisters. Check to make sure the cock is lice-free. He should, in your judgment, be within two ounces of fighting weight. It would be difficult to take more than that off in two weeks without weakening the cock, or put more than two ounces on with a rigorous training schedule. Check for broken wing or tail feathers. Do not fight cocks with badly broken feathers. For a bent feather, where the shaft is bent but not broken, carefully straighten the shaft, and apply a small piece of tape to the feather. Usually, this will prevent further damage, at least temporarily.  
  
If, in your opinion, the cock is in good health and near his actual fighting weight, then set him aside as a definite possibility. After you have narrowed down your selections to a workable number, weigh them, match according to weights, and spar. This is where the real selection process takes place. The good selector will be able to separate the duds from the aces, or at least the good cocks from the poor ones.  
  
If possible, have two other people actually pit the cocks, so you can be free to observe. Watch how the cocks move, where they are aiming their licks, how accurate they are. Are they well balanced, do they land-.in position to hit again, do they have to have a bill-hold to hit, do they duck, are their licks delivered with snap? During the rest periods, how hard are they breathing? Is either rattling? The answers to these questions should determine your choices.  
  
How many cocks to actually put up is a decision you must make, although this may be determined by the number of your available cocks. I would personally hesitate to enter a conditioning program without at least two cocks more than were needed. For example, for a 5-cock derby, I would put up seven or eight. If you put in two hard weeks of work on a show of cocks, it is heartbreaking to have one of your cocks come down with a cold the day before the derby and have to miss it. Remember Murphy's Law: if anything can go wrong, it will, and at the worst possible moment! So, be prepared. I can't tell you how many times this has happened to me. About three years ago I had up six stags for a 5 stag derby. The morning before the derby I went to load my stags, and lo and behold, one stag was beat up, slip-bill and bloody, and one other was missing! After much head scratching, I finally-figured it out. What happened was this: the evening before the derby, one stag had gotten out of his holding stall probably I hadn't latched it securely and immediately began to fight with the closest stag through the door. When darkness fell, the stag that was loose had stopped fighting and wandered outside (the door of the cockhouse was open for ventilation), into the woods-where he either died or was eaten by varmints. To make a long story short, determined to fight in the derby, I picked a stag off a string walk, loaded up and left. Know what happened? You guessed it. I won four and lost one the substitute! I still tied for the derby, but that one fight cost me about ,000 in prize money. So don't let it happen to you put up enough cocks to make up for these emergencies.  
  
Drugs and Supplements  
  
Most knowledgeable cockers will admit that there are many drugs and additives that can increase the performance level of your fowl IF, and this is the big if you know how to select the correct drug, administer the proper dosage, and give it at the proper time. A "drug", whether you realize it or not, can be simply defined as any substance that can alter any one of the thousands of chemical actions that take place in the body. Alcohol is a drug. So is aspirin. Since the use of drugs during the conditioning process requires so much knowledge and experience in dosage, timing and the effects of the drugs themselves I can only recommend the use of two drugs for the average cocker. These two drugs are testosterone (male hormone) and vitamin B-12. All the successful cockers I know use one or both of these, whether they will admit it or not.  
  
Testosterone, used in moderate and sensible doses, will help activate the pointing process by stimulating certain functions of the body that relate to physical and mental development of the male sex drive. Given in prolonged, massive doses (which you should never use), it will promote the growth process, causing accelerated muscle and bone growth.  
  
Vitamin B-12 is a good, all-around the therapeutic drug. It promotes good appetite and soothes the nervous system. You cannot overdose on B-12 because it is "water-soluble", meaning the body passes off what it cannot use. In fact, some people swear by B-12 as a sure cure for a hangover! B-12 is especially helpful in traveling cocks because it seems to calm them without any tranquilizing effect.  
  
The use of these two drugs with this conditioning method is completely optional. If you are unsure about administering them, then by all means, don't do it. Chances are, your cocks will do just as well without them, especially if you have doubts about their usage. As you become better acquainted with this method, you may want to try them later.  
  
If you decide to use these drugs, you must follow my directions on dosage and timing. This is very important. I believe you should never give more than the recommended dosage of any drug to a cock in keep. Remember, a cock has a small body mass compared to humans, so dosages must be adjusted accordingly. Always use a small gauge needle to avoid bruising or otherwise harming the tissue of the cock. Give all injections in the breast muscle, not near a bone. The ideal needle seems to be the disposable type used by diabetics. Most drug stores carry it and you won't need a prescription to buy it. Just ask for insulin syringes. Never use one needle for two different drugs, and dispose of the syringe after three or four injections.  
  
One cautionary note on the use of testosterone (male hormone) prolonged or often use of this drug may cause the cock to be sterile later on. You see, by injecting the male hormone, the body's natural production of testosterone may be discouraged. In other words, if you use this drug on a cock in keep more than, say, four times a year, he won't lay eggs next year, but he might not be fertile when bred to hens. So, don't use it more than a couple of times a year on any cock you intend to breed. I don't usually breed battle cocks, so I don't have that problem.  
  
Since I don't want to promote anyone's products I won't recommend any particular supplier of testosterone or B-12. You can obtain either drug from advertisers in the gamefowl magazines or from a vet.  
  
As I said before, there are drugs that will produce incredibly sharp cocks, if given at the proper times with the proper dosage, but if you make one error in using drugs, you will have incredibly dull cocks at fight time. So, I think if you are a beginner and/or do not have a lot of experience and knowledge, you are better off without the drugs. Remember, consistency is the key to an 80% win average, and I guarantee consistency will be easier without the use of a number of drugs. At a later date, if the demand for such a book is sufficient, I will offer a complete guide to the use of drugs on gamefowl.  
  
Traveling Cocks Next Stop, Sunset?  
  
There are as many theories about transporting cocks from Point A (your cockhouse) to Point B (the pit), as there are Polish jokes. Common sense and a basic knowledge of fowl should be your guides. Gamefowl sleep from dark until dawn, (The exception being, of course, when your mother-in-law visits. Then they crow all night.) So, when you travel from Point A to Point B you want your fowl to obtain the maximum rest; in other words, to sleep through the trip if possible. The logical method, then, is to travel your cocks at night, allowing just enough traveling time to arrive at the pit when your cocks would normally be waking up at dawn. If you live within a four to six hour drive of the pit, and if that pit conducts its fights during the daytime, that's exactly what you want to do.  
  
If you insist on traveling your cocks to a pit more than 8 hours away, you must realize that you are facing a number of problems and you are placing yourself at a distinct disadvantage with the other, closer entries. If you really want to fight at Sunset and it's 1000 miles away, my advice is:  
  
1. Condition at the pit.  
2. Fly your cocks down on a chartered plane.  
3. Move to Louisiana.  
  
If you plan to haul your cocks more than 8 hours at a stretch forget it. You are not going to compete on an equal basis with any local cocker at the pit, even if your cocks are better than his. Ever wonder why it's so tough to whip a guy on his own turf? Think about it. With the number of fine local pits in the country, it shouldn't be necessary for anyone to travel that far to enter a derby.  
  
If you fight at night, take heart. All the other entries do, too. Personally, I don't think you gain anything by moving your cocks to the pit a day early. The fact that the cocks are in strange surroundings will nullify any advantage you achieve by hauling them at night. The best you can do is hauling them as empty as possible and hope for the best. Let me add a piece of advice here. Whenever possible, haul cocks empty or at least when their crops have been emptied. If they are traveled with feed in their crops, they will not digest this feed and it will often sour.  
  
The Keep Feed  
  
As was mentioned previously, the principle behind this conditioning method is "carbohydrate loading". To accomplish this, we must feed a low carbohydrate-high protein feed up until the last two days of the keep when the "loading" process begins. To "load" a cock, work will be dropped off and the cocks will be fed a high carbohydrate diet to increase the amount of glycogen in their muscles. Although this all sounds complicated, it really isn't as you'll see when we' get into the feed and work.  
  
The whole point of a keep is to put as much feed through a cock as possible without increasing his weight. We want to avoid upsetting the fowl's digestion at all cost, so we will only feed natural feed during the keep feed that is a regular part of a chicken's diet or feed specifically formulated for a chicken. To insure proper digestion, a fowl must have good, hard grit to help grind his feed'. Granite grit, not oyster shell, must be available to your cocks at all times. The best way to provide the grit is to keep o cup of it in your fly pens. You may even want to mix a handful in your cocks' feed during the first week of the keep. Make sure all your feed is both fresh and clean. Musty and dusty feed will throw your cocks off completely, if necessary, wash the feed before mixing it.  
  
Your regular keep feed should include the following:

* Oat groats (not whole oats, they will often constipate cocks).
* Corn (hard flint corn is best).
* Racing pigeon feed (the mixed feed, not Pigeon chow).
* Laying pellets (at least 20% protein, but 30% is better).
* Chopped boiled eggs (about one-third per cock).
* Buttermilk (unsalted is the best).
* Cottage cheese (unsalted if you can get it).

To mix your feed, use a large bowl, shallow enough to stir the ingredients. Put in two parts pigeon feed, one part corn, one part oat groats and one part lay pellets. Mix well and add the correct amount of chopped hard-boiled eggs. Never feed raw eggs, the whites coat the intestinal tract and hamper digestive absorption. When this is thoroughly stirred, add enough buttermilk or cottage cheese to moisten the entire feed. Alternate between cottage cheese and buttermilk for moisture. Both are beneficial because they are high in protein and provide needed bacteria for digestion. Mix no more than one day's feed at a time and store in a refrigerator so that it will remain fresh. This is the feed you will use up until the last two days of the keep. For the last two days, you will use scratch grain (chopped corn and wheat), lightly moistened with water. Each feed, morning and evening, will consist of approximately 1 1/2 ounces of the mixture, except where noted. Remember treat all cocks as individuals. No two are alike. I can't emphasize this fact enough. This is especially true when it comes to the amounts of feed. The 11/2 ounces is merely a guide cocks should be weighed each morning and evening and feed adjusted accordingly. Weight control is something you must pay close attention to, and it is something you must learn by trial and error. It simply can't be taught. The best advice I can give you is this. Hold a cock in your hands and feel back toward the vent, between the end of the breastbone and the pelvic bones. The flesh there should be thin and firm. It should not bulge; if it does, the cock is fat. Don't hesitate to skip a feed or two if the cock doesn't show a good appetite and willingness to clean his feed cup. Don't be surprised if the cocks drop an ounce or so during the first few days of the keep. This is natural they should rebound soon and be trying to peck the bottoms out of their feed cups.  
  
After the feed is measured into the cups, I sprinkle a little vitamin supplement over the feed mixture. You can use any number of products for this Vitapol and Headstart are two products I have used with good success. Both are available from the gamefowl journals or most good feed stores. This supplement should be used up until the last two days.  
  
The Work  
  
As I have stated before, there is no substitute for good, hard work in a training program. Handwork for the cocks will consist of "flys" to the board. Your work board should be approximately waist-high, lightly padded and out of view of the other cocks to keep them from being excited. To train a cock to the board, stand a couple of feet from the bench and lightly toss him to it. Rub him and repeat the process. Soon he will get the idea and will willingly fly to the board, even straining against your hands, from as far away as 8 feet. About six feet is the ideal distance to have the cock fly to the board. Just hold him under the wings, back up, and let him go. This is the work I refer to as "flys".  
After cocks are hand-worked and fed each morning, place in fly pens with clean litter. Make sure fresh water is always available to the cocks while they are in the flypens. In the evenings, bring the cocks into the cockhouse, work them, and then place them in their keep stalls. It is a good idea to always allow the cocks ten minutes or so to cool off before feeding. Allow cocks ample time to drink after feeding-up until the last day.  
  
Work and Feed Schedule  
  
Day Actions  
Day 1 - (Sunday) Morning: Spar cocks when empty, put in keep stalls. Evening: Worm and delouse. No feed today.  
Day 2 - (Monday) Morning: 10 Flys Evening: 10 Flys  
Day 3 - (Tuesday) Morning: 20 Flys Evening: 20 Flys  
Day 4 - (Wednesday) Morning: 30 Flys Evening: 30 Flys  
Day 5 - (Thursday) Morning: 40 Flys Evening: 40 Flys  
Day 6 - (Friday) Morning: 50 Flys Evening: 50 Flys  
Day 7 - (Saturday) Morning: 60 Flys Evening: 60 Flys  
Day 8 - (Sunday) No work today. No morning feed. Spar about 10:00 a.m., then place in fly pens. No work in the evening. Regular feed. If you are using the drugs, give ¼ cc of testosterone and ¼ cc of B-12.  
Day 9 - (Monday) Morning: 50 Flys Evening: 50 Flys  
Day 10 - (Tuesday) Morning: 60 Flys Evening: 60 Flys  
Day 11 - (Wednesday) Morning: 50 Flys Evening: 50 Flys  
Day 12 - (Thursday) Thursday Morning: No work. Feed scratch grain, moistened with water for next two days. Place in fly pens. Evening: No work. Same feed as morning.  
Day 13 - (Friday) Morning: No work. Take cocks out of keep stalls, handle and rub, then return and feed. Darken stalls. Evening: If cocks are to be fought Saturday feed three-quarters of the regular amount. If fight is Saturday night, feed a full feed. Give ¼ cc of B-12 and ½ cc of testosterone.  
Day 14 - (Fight Day) Morning: If fight is during the day, no feed. If the fight is at night, feed three-quarters of the regular amount.  
During the last two days of the keep, you must begin to regulate moisture intake to insure the proper pointing process. Watch the droppings carefully they should be moist but firm, not dry.  
  
D-Day at the Pit  
  
Your first chore upon arriving at the pit is to secure a cockhouse, preferably one that can be darkened completely. Clean out all stalls you intend to use and replace the old litter with fresh. After this is done, one by one put your cocks out in small (approximately 21 x 21) wire pens to stretch and empty out after their trip. Make sure the ground is swept clean under the pens. If the pit weighs in derby entries, take each cock and weigh him in before putting him in the cockhouse. To avoid searching, it is a good idea to write down the leg band number and/or weight on the door of each stall as the cock is placed in it. Completely darken the cockhouse, and avoid disturbing the cocks until it is time to heel.  
  
If the pit allows you to weigh and record your own weights, you can gamble some. Obviously, you want your cocks to meet the smallest (lightest) cocks possible so you can "under-weigh" your cocks as much as you dare. I have known cockers that would weigh their cocks in two ounces light, hoping they would lose that much between then and fight time. (I have also seen cockers have to cut every feather except wings and tail off the cock to meet weights, too). So, to be safe, record your cocks at least one-half ounce light on your sheet because the cocks will lose at least that much.  
  
The End  
  
The most important thing you can learn when you are conditioning cocks is that each show represents a new set of difficulties, a different series of problems. Be flexible, use your common and "chicken" sense. But remember, above all, you must have good cocks to win. There is no substitute for quality fowl or for quality care. To be in the winner's circle, you must have both. If problems arise, you can email me and I will do my best to answer your questions.  
-Don Blansett