Poultry school helps backyard poultry producers with production basics

The Situation
An exploding interest in self-sufficiency, a desire to know where our food comes from and what inputs are used in producing it, and difficult economic times have influenced many individuals and families to develop their own backyard poultry flocks. Many of these people have gotten into this new “hobby” without fully understanding what they really need to know about raising a healthy chicken flock. Others have postponed their entry into this new endeavor while waiting to become more educated in the various components of broiler and egg production. Finding a source of reliable, non-biased information for use in local circumstances can often be challenging.

Our Response
Extension Educators Stuart Parkinson of Franklin County and Rauhn Panting of Oneida County examined the situation and concluded that many of the educational needs of the local backyard poultry producers could be met through a two evening poultry production school.

Dr. David Frame, Utah State University Poultry Production specialist, was invited to be the keynote speaker, to address the more technical subject areas such as nutrition, and disease recognition and prevention. Dr. Frame was very interested in participating, as this school provided him an opportunity to meet and interact with some of our local backyard poultry producers.

Extension Educators from the Eastern District who have shown an interest in poultry production issues were invited to take part in teaching this school.

Other topics determined to be of value for this school include: “Breeds of Chickens – Advantages and Disadvantaged,” by Lance Ellis, Fremont County; “Housing for Your Flock,” and “Proper Harvest Techniques,” by Stuart Parkinson, Franklin County; “Food Safety Issues with Processing and Storage of Meat and Eggs,” by Laura Sant, Franklin County; and “Good Brooding Practices: Getting Chicks off to a Good Start,” by Rauhn Panting, Oneida County.

Program Outcomes
The poultry production school was held on March 2nd in Preston and on March 3rd in Malad. Instruction the first night was on disease and nutrition and was taught by Dr. Frame. The other topics were covered the second night. Approximately 40 people attended each night.

Six months later, all participants were contacted through a phone survey to assess how they felt the school affected their knowledge and understanding of backyard poultry issues.

Survey Results
Ninety-three percent of respondents said they had used information presented at the poultry school. Examples of information used include: Poultry diet changes, changes to design of chicken coop, rodent control, chick care, feeding off the ground, using new breeds, careful use of medications, and overall better flock management.

When asked if they would attend another poultry school if one were offered, 75% said “yes,” and 25% said “maybe.”

These results show that there is a need for educational programs directed towards backyard poultry production and this poultry school provided useful information in helping backyard poultry meat and egg producers better manage their flocks.
Public School Self Assessment

Self Assessment was made on a scale of 1-5

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<th>Topic Statements for Evaluation</th>
<th>Prior to the Seminar</th>
<th>After the Seminar</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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