



Hot weather, lice and mites

Tackling those creepy crawlies

3 main issues with chicken keeping in hot weather are being much talked about among the online poultry forums:

Mites, Lice and itchy birds

An obvious one, as the birds get very hot, the parasites are attracted to them, and what starts as a small issue can quickly turn into a life-threatening problem as your birds are weakened by these 'vampires'. These critters can live in the housing or directly on the birds, and it is crucial to spot them early; a fortnightly, or at the very least, a monthly health check is vital. Check in the warm areas like the fluff around their vents, and also the top-knot of any crested birds.



Poultry Lice

You will see either small light brown insects scuttling around on the skin at the base of the feathers, with white eggs (nits) fastened in clumps to the feather quills – these are poultry lice.

Northern Fowl Mites are very similar, but smaller and black and you will notice clumpy stuff on the feathers around your birds' vents as their irritated skin sheds dead skin cells, which mixes with the mite excreta



Poultry Lice eggs (nits)

You need to tackle any issues very quickly, stripping down their housing and spraying it with [Nettex's Total Mite Kill Ready to Use spray](#) and then powdering with [Buz Busters Louse powder](#). A quick visit to a chicken-savvy vet with one of your afflicted birds will furnish you with a prescription-only spot-on product for use on

the birds. This is prescribed off-licence, so you will need to see your vet and take their advice on dosing and possible egg withdrawal.

A regular preventative regime and vigilance are both key in helping to avoid this problem in the first place. Dose your birds with [Nettex Vit Boost poultry tonic](#) to counter the effects of an infestation.

Broodiness: a real problem as your birds get even hotter than their normal 105deg; they will be glued to the nest, possibly even attacking you and other birds when you go near it. They will stop laying themselves, starve as they won't leave the nest, and get even hotter, attracting lice and mites to themselves. Apart from boosting them off the nest every 5 minutes (we have better ways to spend our summer!) the best tried and tested method is to pop them in a broody cage – with food and water - for 3 days, 24/7, which will cool them down and get them back to normal non-hormonal behaviour. See my video [here](#).

Not wanting to eat: like us, they feel less like eating in the very hot weather, so you can expect less eggs, when you'd normally expect laying to be at its peak. You can entice them to eat by adding a little of [Nettex's Mineral Boost Powder](#) to their regular feed; the aniseed scent of it stimulates appetite while the nutrients keep them in top condition. Some dark green leaves (savoy cabbage or dandelion are favourites) strung in the run at the end of the day are good fun for them and provide an essential part of their diet. Add a freezer cool block to their drinker, and they'll be happy hens.