

Management Programme for Red Mite.

By Ian Selby, Poultrynz.© 2024.

Advice on Red Mite comes from many quarters, some bad and some good, but at the end of the day looking after your Poultry comes down to a Management Programme.

While this might be scary to some, it really is a matter of commonsense. Poultry Keepers, whether it be those who are dedicated breeders or a person who keeps 2 or 3 hens for eggs, need to be aware that the quick fix solution to problems will always be that: A quick fix this week and another quick fix next week and another quick fix next week and so on.

In the summer months the worst problem is Red Mites.

These are the Facts you need to know about Red Mites.

1. Red Mites can travel 300 metres in a night.
2. Red Mites cannot fly.
3. Red Mites can live for up to 2 years without feeding.
4. Red Mites do not live on the bird, they live in the cracks and under the perches in your Fowl house.
5. Red Mites affect all types of Poultry, Pigeons and Cagebirds.

Red Mites have been around since the year dot. There has been all sorts of claims to prevent this parasite but they are back year after year, if you are not on top of it then you get a bigger problem.

I have been told that some Poultry Keepers don't get Red Mite but in reality, they do. This again is a management problem. It is all very well spraying your pens or areas with the best products you can buy but its the repeat application - that is the secret to controlling Red Mites.

We know Red Mite become immune to chemical sprays in New Zealand. I have had reports that well-known sprays are now non-effective in some large Poultry Farms and in some cases if you don't follow the 'egg withholding period' you could be poisoning your own family.

The big problem is eliminating the Mite Eggs. 99% of chemical products don't do this. Chemical products have a very short life-span and break down within a few days. How many times have you sprayed with a chemical spray or powder and then had to spray or powder them again and again?

More and more New Zealanders are going the organic way in farming and the Poultry Keepers are finding the same thing. But organic is not a quick fix, it can be very slow. For example; the products we sell do not work immediately. The good part is that the Red Mite are eliminated, the bonus is that the Red Mite eggs do not hatch. It is not a quick fix, out of sight out of mind product. That would be too easy. And believe me there is no easy way to get rid of Red Mites.

But again it is a Management problem and regular use of a product is the better way.

You should have a programme that is regular and you have to be the vigilant one. Carry out your programme as though it is part of what you do to keep your Poultry. I would say at least once every 4 months you should spray out your pens whether they need it or not. You will not get all the Red Mites but you



The Red Mite were so thick in this Fowl Coop that they were outside the coop in daylight.



Here you can see the Red Mite on the walls of the Fowl Coop. Also thousands of Red Mite eggs are there to see in plain daylight.

are limiting their affect to a good manageable level. Remember Poultry Shield removes built up dirt, faecal and waxy deposits and cleanliness is the secret to your success.

You also have to ask the question 'why do I need to get rid of Red Mites.' Not a silly question.

Red Mites feed on the blood of your Poultry. They come out and pray at night. If you get a build up of them they can suck all the blood from your birds and;

1. Put your bird's off the lay.
2. Affect your birds immune system.
3. In effect, can kill your birds.

Not only that, it makes it very uncomfortable for you to go into your fowl house when the mites drop into your hair, you can feel them crawling on your head. Or dropping on your arms etc. then you know you have got them bad. Many broody hens have been put off the brood by a bad infestation of Red Mites, some have been found dead on the nest and the reason was only discovered by the unsuspecting Poultry Keeper when they lift the bird off the nest to reveal thousands of Red Mite in the box.

The best policy is to adopt a good management programme in 3 steps.

Step One: Take the birds out of the pens or coops before you start the process. Do not use a waterblaster o clean the house out as all you are doing is shifting the Red Mites and their eggs outside the house or coop and they will inturn crawl back into the house, the eggs can still hatch too. After you have cleaned the coop or house out and removed the sawdust and bedding etc, you absolutely saturate the walls, ceiling, floors, perches and nest boxes with 2 parts Poultry Shield diluted in 8 parts water. And that means saturate, if you just spray around or mist because you think Poultry Shield is a conventional chemical then it will not work. Poultry Shield has a physical effect on the mites and must come into contact with the mites to work.

Let the coop dry out a bit then sprinkle a liberal amount of Poultrynz D.E. over the perches, nest box and floors. Use Poultrynz D.E. What happens is that when the mites walk over the Poultrynz D.E. they cut their feet and dehydrate.

You can then put the bedding back on the floor and in the nest boxes. The Fowls can also go back in the house or coop. There is no egg withholding period.

Step Two: If there is a heavy infestation of mites you should repeat **Step One again one week later** to ensure you get any mite eggs that have not come into contact when you sprayed the first time.

Step Three: After the house is dry the second step is probably the whole secret. This process can be done a day or so after step one.

Remove the Fowls again. Mix Poultrynz D.E. with water to make a slurry. The amount of Poultrynz D.E. you use depends on how big your house or coop is. Mix the slurry to a consistency that is easily used with a paint brush. You then apply the slurry to the cracks, on and under the perches and the nestbox. Making sure that you apply a good amount under the perches. You can apply it to the walls and ceiling if you wish for a better affect. You can then return the birds to the coop.

When this dries it will form a barrier that repells the Red Mites.

When you paint it on you are able to dab all the nail holes and cracks where they live and in effect seal them off. Remember Red Mites can't fly so to feed they need to get at the bird and a lot will go under the perches. If they walk over the Poultrynz D.E. slurry you have got them, well within 72hours.



Red Mite are easily seen after there feeding and are found in cracks in all parts of the Fowl Coop.



Another example of a Red Mite infestation in a Fowl Coop.