

Dropping Board - Keeping a Clean Coop



How to Keep the Dropping Board Clean

Dropping board is a term used to describe the area directly below the roost bar in a chicken coop. It helps by collecting the manure and keeping it contained so that removal of the chicken manure is easy to complete.

With chores, I always find that the easier they are to complete, the more likely that the chore will get completed. While chickens are sleeping on the roost at night, feces drop from them onto whatever is directly below. Not cleaning up this poopy mess is not adding to the healthy environment you want for your flock.



Add a
Dropping Board
to the Coop



We Made a Beginner Error!

We did not realize this when we built our coop. The manure dropping into the built in nest boxes below was a disgusting problem. I did not look forward to cleaning that mess up every week. The smell of manure would sometimes get pretty bad and some years the flies were just terrible. I tried to clean up daily so that the task would never grow too large. I thought there had to be a better way.

How I Made the Dropping Board in Our Coop



I placed two wide boards across the top of the nest boxes that sat under the roost bar. These boards would serve as the dropping board. Doing just this helped the problem some, but I still had to clean manure off the dropping board frequently.

If I failed to clean the dropping boards daily, flies and odor crept in.

How to Fix a Muddy Chicken Run

One day I tried laying feed bags on top of the dropping board. The chickens promptly threw the bags on the floor of the coop.

Thinking up a better plan, I smoothed the bags out better, laid them on the dropping board and tucked them in behind the boards, up close to the wall. Pushing the dropping board back to the coop wall anchoring the bags, and keeping them from being pushed to the floor worked better. Now the dropping boards had a lining that was easier to scrape clean.



How To Clean and Change the Dropping Board Liner



Next I generously sprinkle a lime product called First Saturday Lime onto the dropping board liner. This lime product is safe for animals and poultry and is an extra source of calcium for the hens.

On top of the liner I add straw or pine shavings. This adds to the ease of cleanup by absorbing any liquid droppings.



I take three things into the coop for a quick cleanup.

- a bucket
- dust pan
- cat litter scoop



Use the scoop to scrape the mess off the dropping board and onto the dust pan. Dump it into the bucket for easy removal to the compost area. Replace the entire set up when needed. If you purchase feed in paper bags (not the poly bags), you can

add the entire layered mess to the compost bin.

What About Poly Feed Bags

If you use poly bags, you will need to scrap off the bags and remove them from the compost material to the trash. Either way, the process is quick. Keeping up with this clean up routine will greatly reduce the odor and flies in the chicken coop.



Alternative Dropping Board Material

We have plenty of empty feed bags every week from feeding the animals on our farm. If you don't use enough feed bags to try this method, perhaps newspaper would work the same way. Using newspaper, you would have to change it out more frequently than twice a week with the feed bags. You can add newspaper to the compost pile as well. This method might not work for every chicken coop but it has made one job, on our farm, easier to complete.

Messes in the coop are inevitable. Here's another idea that will help keep your chicken area cleaner.

Peek Into Our Coop

You can watch this video about how the system is set up .