

Winter Chicken Coop Cleaning



Many chicken keepers don't do much winter chicken coop cleaning. When you notice a slight ammonia smell in the chicken coop, it's time to investigate the source. You may have to do a winter chicken coop cleaning. It's been colder here, recently. We had been steadily adding bedding to the coop during the cold snaps. I believe in using the "**Deep Litter**" method of coop maintenance during the winter. You can read my explanation of this [here](#).

Basically, you will continue to add dry bedding and let the waste material, ie, chicken poop, decompose in the coop to add warmth. This works perfectly if you can keep the coop dry and not spill any water. Using straw and kiln dried shavings is the best way to be successful with the deep litter method. The chickens had been in the coop a lot more than usual the past week and at one point a rubber bowl of water had been tipped over. Anytime moisture is introduced into the environment with

chicken waste and bedding, ammonia and odor will form. The best remedy for this is to remove any damp or wet bedding, shavings, straw, as soon as possible. Allow the area to dry and then replace with new, fresh shavings and straw.





How I Perform a Winter Chicken Coop Cleaning

Okay, so what do I do? The temperature fluctuates greatly here in the winter. I know we need to build up some insulation again in the coop. Taking out a good portion of the accumulated straw, leaving the bottom layer of dry shavings intact, is one way to keep some insulating warmth in the coop. I changed out all the nesting areas and cleaned up under the roost bars really well. Adding more dry straw to the floor will ensure the chickens stay toasty warm overnight. A good airing out of the coop took care of the ammonia odor that was beginning to form.

The piles of bedding outside will lend some excitement to the chicken's lives for a couple of days. They will pick through for any missed morsels of grain. There may even be a bug or two hiding in the bedding. I let the chickens scratch through the used bedding in the run until it partially composts. Then it is removed to complete the compost process.

Summer vs. Winter Chicken Coop Cleaning

I only use deep litter bedding in the winter months. During warm weather parts of the year I keep less pine shavings on the floor of the coop, and clean it out weekly. The nest boxes and roosting bar and dropping areas are cleaned daily or almost daily. The humidity here seems to be a big problem for using deep litter coop maintenance in the summer. Keeping less bedding and cleaning frequently keeps flies away and leaves a sweeter smelling coop.

The Timing of Coop Cleaning

All this coop cleaning was going on during prime egg laying time. I was trying to be quick to get the maid service work done and get out of the way. The line was forming for the nest boxes as I pushed some fresh straw into the nests.



A Rooster in the Nest Box? Hazards of Mid Winter Coop Cleaning

Then a lot of squawking occurred. I looked over and saw TJ the Rooster in a nest box! Crazy boy. Nests are for girls. I watched as a crowd formed. The hens were clearly not happy about a boy being in the nest area. They let him know he must be moving on. The girls had serious work to do. The coop cleaning was done and I needed to move on too.





Finally they convinced TJ to flee the area.



All's Well that Ends Well.



COOP
CLEANING

In the
Winter

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