

# UNDERSTANDING POULTRY RED MITE



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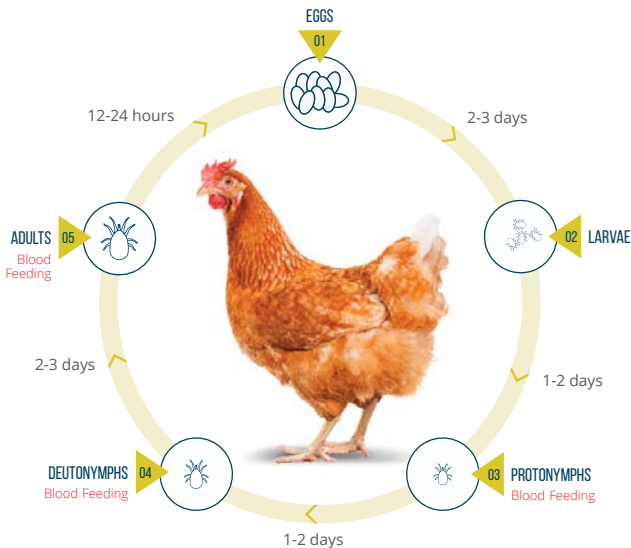
Reference: 1. Höglund J, Nordenfos H, Uggla A, 1995. Prevalence of the poultry red mite, *Dermanyssus gallinae*, in different types of production systems for egg layers in Sweden. Poultry Science, 74 (11): p. 1793-1798.

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Poultry red mite is a surprisingly common and unpleasant problem for many backyard chickens. In one study 67%<sup>1</sup> of backyard flocks examined were found to be suffering with infestations.

## WHAT IS POULTRY RED MITE?

Poultry red mite (*Dermanyssus gallinae*) is a blood-feeding ectoparasite that can cause stress and discomfort to your chickens. They are usually active between May and October and have a very short lifecycle, meaning they can develop from egg into an egg-laying female in 7 days.



## WHAT PROBLEMS CAN POULTRY RED MITE CAUSE?

Mite bites are painful and will cause skin irritation and stress to your chickens. You might notice:

- ▶ A drop in the number of eggs your hens lay
- ▶ Increased feather plucking and grooming
- ▶ Restlessness and irritability
- ▶ Pale comb and wattle

In high numbers they can leave your chickens susceptible to disease and even cause death. Poultry red mite can also bite people causing skin irritation.

## WILL I BE ABLE TO SEE THE MITES ON MY CHICKENS?

Although the mites are very small, they will be visible. The mites will only feed on your chickens at night and will hide in the crevices of the coop or shed during the day. This means that it can be very difficult to find the mites on your chickens. It is therefore important to check in the corners and crevices of the coop.



## HOW DO MY CHICKENS GET POULTRY RED MITE?

Your chickens can be infested with poultry red mite in several ways. The mites can be transferred from chicken to chicken as well as by people and equipment. Rodents and other birds can carry the mite and cause infestation.

## HOW CAN I GET RID OF POULTRY RED MITE?

There are limited licenced products available for treating poultry red mite in backyard chickens. Many strategies have focussed on treating the environment but now there is a product available that is added to the water and treats the chicken. When mites feed from a treated chicken they will be killed.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON AN EFFECTIVE TREATMENT FOR POULTRY RED MITE PLEASE SPEAK TO YOUR VETERINARY SURGEON.**