

Kids Korner

Chicken Lays Incredible Eggs

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LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.)

— Adam Huegal gathers eggs every day from the family's flock of 23 chickens. He's accustomed to gathering extra large eggs, but recently he was flabbergasted when he found an egg in the nest that was larger than a goose egg.

Two days later, he found another huge egg. Two days after that, another one showed up in the nest.

That day a chicken died and since then, Adam hasn't found another egg that matches that size.

He suspects laying such large eggs caused the chicken to "floop the coop."

When Adam's mother Shirley cracked one of the eggs to use in baking, she was in for another surprise. Inside the egg shell was a perfectly formed egg plus another perfectly-shaped whole egg — shell intact. She cracked open the second huge egg, and found an identical situation.

"I've been raising chickens for 27 years and I never saw anything like it," she said.

Neither have the people she contacted.

The Huegals weighed the egg

found inside the egg and found that it went higher than the scale's measurements.

Although the Huegals don't know how much the eggs weigh, Shirley measured them and found they are 7 1/4 x 9 1/4 inches.

The chicken that laid these amazing eggs was from a flock called Red Sexlinks, known for being good layers, and the same breed that the Huegals always raise. The company that sells the breed wasn't aware of such large eggs being laid before.

Although Shirley did find a triple yoker on occasion, she can't figure out why the chicken laid such large eggs three times in a row. The chickens are fed laying mash with some chop added.

"Because chickens will eat anything, we also throw our garbage to them," Shirley said.

Maybe it was nutritional garbage.

The Huegals also raise geese in the meadow, but those eggs are white. The chicken eggs are brown and the chickens are penned in a shed. So it couldn't be a relocated goose egg.

In addition to chickens, Adam helps his dad Ed take care of 60

rabbits, 14 geese, four lambs, two steers, 12 turkeys, and a constantly exploding population of guinea pigs that his mom raises to sell.

About 5 to 10 bunnies are usually born to the rabbits, but one time, 16 bunnies were born from one mother rabbit.

Generally the offspring are sold, but occasionally Adam or his mother find one that is particularly endearing and they refuse to part with it.

That was the case of Red Ryder, born as a runt two years ago. The male rabbit is so huge now that one would never suspect it was once a runt.

Shirley said that she was raised on a farm, but it's her husband, formerly from the city, who most enjoys raising animals on the family's two acres.

The parents think it is good training for kids to have chores and animals to attend to every day.

Adam wrinkles his nose at that statment because he prefers to play baseball, soccer, and football. Everyday he rushes through his chores and heads for the neighboring Amish farm.

"They have 12 kids, and they're better at baseball than the kids at school," Adam said.

It isn't that Adam doesn't like the animals. He does, when he doesn't have other things to do. But he doesn't like cleaning out pens on Saturday.

Adam's favorite subject as a fifth grader at Fritz Elementary School is math. He plans to be a banker.

Every week the family goes to Green Dragon, a farmers' market. While his dad watches the auction and his mother "goes everywhere," Adam buys and trades baseball, basketball, and football cards. He has 1,000 baseball cards.

Adam isn't sure what he will do with the one remaining egg. But he's been checking the "Guinness Book of Records" and found that the largest egg ever recorded had nine yolks.

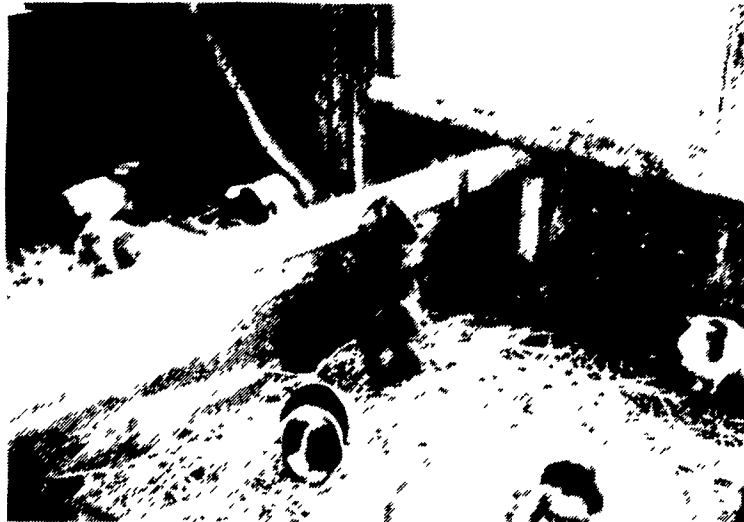
Imagine!



Amazing! Adam compares an extra-large size egg on the right with one of the huge eggs one his chickens laid.



For the first time in almost 30 years of raising chickens, the Huegals found eggs that contained a perfectly formed egg within an egg in addition to a yolk and white.



Can you identify Butterscotch, Skunk, Cocoa, Milky Way, Reeses, Holstein, and Mud.

Kids: Surprise Your Family!

Kids, surprise your mother, father, grandma or grandpa, by sending us a little write up about them. If you have a photo, please include one with the story. If you prefer to draw a picture, you may include that also.

Send your letters, stories, photos, and pictures to Lou Ann Good, Lancaster Farming, P.O. Box 609, Ephrata, PA 17522.

Upcoming Stamp Show

KING OF PRUSSIA (Montgomery Co.) — A stamp show will be held with a special emphasis on encouraging youth to participate in stamp collecting will be held on April 22 and 23 at the Holiday Inn, 260 Mall Blvd., King of Prussia. The Central Atlantic Stamp

Dealers Association (CASDA) and the Lansdale 4-H Stamp Club are sponsoring the event.

Free stamps, materials, and information on stamp collecting will be offered.

For more information, call 1-800-322-3232.



Eleven-year-old Adam holds Red Ryder, one of the many animals he and his parents, Shirley and Ed, raise on their farmette.