

Natural Probiotics for Chickens



A lot of my time and energy is spent on ways I can improve my animals lives. One thing I spend time on concerns their feed. I research the best ways to bring great nutrition to their bowls. One way to add a nutritional boost to your chicken's food is to include natural Probiotics. There are two simple and easy ways to get natural probiotics for chickens. Apple Cider Vinegar is easy to make at home, using apple peels and scraps. Another simple and often overlooked or unknown source of probiotics is fermented chicken feed. Apple Cider Vinegar makes use of the naturally occurring acetic acid. Fermenting the grain creates lactic acid which is beneficial to both humans and animals!

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You can make your own!

Why would you want to add [probiotics for chickens](#) using fermented feed to your chicken's diet? Evidence and studies show that it can increase the egg weight, and shell thickness. It helps chickens naturally resist pathogenic organisms like E-coli and Salmonella. And one reason that particularly pleases your wallet, the chickens will eat less grain and their bodies will use the feed more efficiently. Fermenting increases the nutrients available in the feed and creates new vitamins such as B vitamins, Folic Acid, Riboflavin, Thiamin and Niacin.

How to Ferment Chicken Grain

Grab a large glass container, a BPA -free bucket or some large vessel that can be covered and will not leach metal or chemicals into the feed during the fermentation process. Make the amount appropriate for feeding your flock maybe a few times a week. The same liquid can be reused so the container can be refilled as you dip out the feed needed. If you have just a few chickens, you could use a large glass bowl, a quart or half gallon jar. The other options for larger flocks could be a large food grade storage bucket, a glass ice tea jar, or something else appropriate in size for your flock.

Place the dry grain into the container

Cover with de-chlorinated water. (de-chlorinate water by letting it sit in an open container for a day) Add enough water to completely cover the grain. Grain left uncovered by the water could become moldy. Adding a tablespoon or two of Whey will help the process get started but is not necessary. Lactobacillus bacteria is already present in the air we breath so it is already in the jar of feed.

Cover the container loosely and leave at room temperature.

Stir the grain daily, stirring up from the bottom. If water is being absorbed, add enough to cover the grain. Bubbles should be forming and even a thin skim of milky looking film could be forming. This is good!



The grain should be ready to use in three to four days. Smell it. It should have a sour smell similar to sourdough. It should not smell rancid or moldy. Mold is bad. If the fermented feed smells like alcohol, you might be able to rescue it by adding two tablespoons of Apple Cider Vinegar to the mix and letting the acetic acid eat the alcohol.

Strain the grain, allowing the liquid to drain back into the jar or bowl. The liquid is teeming with probiotics and can be used a few times to make more batches of fermented grain. Add more de-chlorinated water as needed.

Voilà! Natural Probiotics for Chickens and you made it yourself!

Now,

Feed the Chickens!



I used my fermentation tools from [Fermentools](http://Fermentools.com). While in the case of fermenting chicken feed, the air-lock system is a bit of an over kill, since the food does not have a long ferment, I decided to use them anyway. Fermentools has a top notch line of fermenting accessories that I do use for fermenting people food! You know its so good for us too right? The kits come in many sizes and all you need it a wide mouth canning jar. Check the company website here for more.



www.fermentools.com

Apple Cider Vinegar

Making your own unpasteurized apple cider vinegar couldn't be easier. This is another way to add natural probiotics for chickens. It is made from apple scraps and peels. I can't believe I have not written a post before on making Apple Cider Vinegar! This is the [first post I read](#) about it and is how I learned to make this simply amazing substance. I simply put the scraps in a bowl, add enough water to cover the solids.

Stir in about a quarter cup of sugar to the large bowl. Use less sugar for smaller quantities. Place something heavy on top, such as a plate, to submerge the apple scraps. Cover with a lightweight kitchen towel. Set aside for about 10 days to two weeks at room temperature. You should see bubbles developing around the edge. IF you see some moldy spots develop it is ok to remove them and try to re submerge the solids so this doesn't keep happening. Next, using a mesh strainer, drain the liquids into a jar and discard the solids. Put a cloth over the top of the jar, and apply the ring but not the flat lid to the canning jar. Put the starting vinegar in a dark place for 6 weeks or more.

When the vinegar is ready it should smell like a good vinegar! If it smells like wine or alcohol, it is not ready. Return it to the dark cupboard and wait a bit longer. When the vinegar is ready, replace the solid flat lid and store. The vinegar has an unlimited shelf life.

Adding two tablespoons of your homemade vinegar to your chicken's water a few times a week will keep their digestive tracts healthier, reduce their susceptibility to intestinal parasites, and just help keep them healthier and more robust. A good post to read about chickens digestive tracts and natural and also harmful bacteria and parasites [can be found here.](#)

Now you know how easy it is to make fermented foods to benefit your flock. Why not grab a jar and start some fermented feed today. Please come back and let me know your experience and how things worked out.

Sources used and further reading on this topic

Garden Betty – [Why and How to Ferment Your Chicken Feed](#)

Natural Chicken Keeping – [Fermented Feed](#)

Fresh Eggs Daily [How to Save Money by Fermenting Chicken Feed](#)

Bluetooth Hollow – [Fermenting Feed for Chickens](#)

Fresh Eggs Daily – [Make Your Own Apple Cider Vinegar](#)

Untrained Housewife – [How to Make Apple Cider Vinegar](#)