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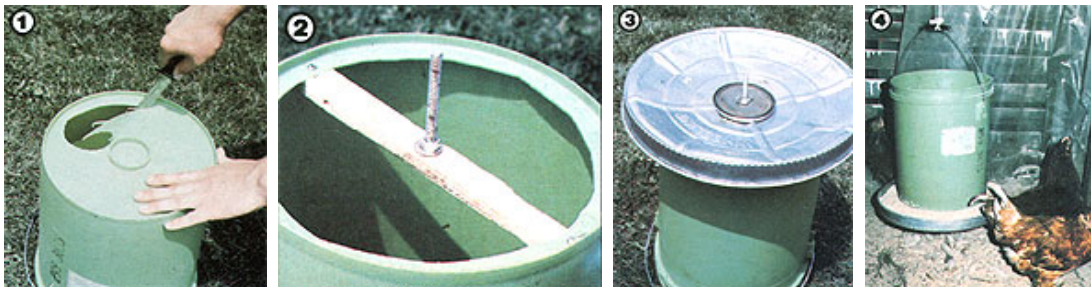
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Issue #79 - January/February 1983

Most hens waste more mash than they eat, but you can put an end to their spendthrift ways:

HANG YOUR CHICKEN FEED!

Ray Meloy



[1] Leave a 1" border when you cut out the bottom of the pail. [2] Then attach the crosspiece and bolt . . . [3] fasten on the pan and support disk . . . [4] and hang your homemade feeder at the appropriate height. (Photos by the Author)

I like raising poultry about as much as anybody does, but let's face it . . . chickens have absolutely rotten table manners. If given the opportunity to do so, they'll walk all over their feed, scatter the provender to and fro, and — worse yet — leave droppings on perfectly good (and danged expensive) mash.

Sure, there are commercial feeders on the market that are designed to discourage such misdeeds (the common trough models, for example, are often equipped with loose center rails that keep the birds from standing on or over their food), but even those devices have their shortcomings: They can be difficult to fill, hold only a small amount of mix, and have a way of disassembling themselves between feedings.

That's why I designed a hanging feeder that can be raised (as the birds grow) or lowered (for youngsters) . . . prevents spillage and spoilage . . . requires only infrequent refillings . . . and — best of all — can be cobbled together, in just a couple of hours, from little more than common household and workshop items.

CONSTRUCTION

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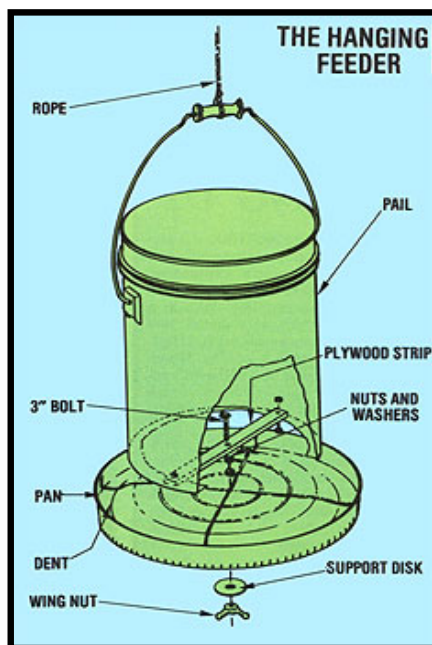
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The main component of my invention is a hopper made from a five-gallon plastic pail. If you don't already have a bucket that you can spare, you can probably get one at a fast-food restaurant. The quick-eats emporiums often buy margarine and other foodstuffs in such containers, and either give away the empties or sell them for a dollar or two.

You'll also need a shallow circular pan with a lip all the way around its circumference. I used the lid from a metal ten-gallon garbage can (I removed the handle first) . . . but any similar item that has a diameter 1-1/2" to 3" larger than that of the hopper, and is no more than 4 inches deep, will do. (If you're handy with sheet metal, you could even make a suitable tray yourself.)

Turn the plastic pail upside down and snip out its bottom . . . leaving a 1"-wide border all around. Now, cut a strip of 1/2" plywood about an inch wide and as long as the bucket's interior diameter. Place the piece inside the pail so that its ends rest on the 1" rim, and — after drilling a small hole at each end of the plywood and through the plastic — secure the strip in place with a couple of nuts and bolts.



Next, choosing a point in the middle of that wooden crossmember, drill a hole large enough to accommodate a 1/4" or 5/16" bolt . . . insert the (3"-long) threaded fastener so that it extends outward through the bottom . . . and fasten it in place with a washer and nut. Then slip on another nut and washer — in that order — about halfway up the bolt.

With that done, take the metal pan and — using a rubber mallet or, if you're careful not to pound too hard, a regular hammer — indent the bottom upward so that the pan's middle is nearly as high as its outer lip . . . forming a circular trough around the periphery (this will insure an even flow of feed from the hopper). Now, drill a hole in the center of the pan, and slip the trough onto the 3" bolt (top side facing the bucket, of course).

The feeder will have to support a fair amount of mash (a five-gallon pail holds about 25 pounds of grain) . . . so it's a good idea to install a large (4" or so) metal disk — rather than an ordinary washer — beneath the pan. You can use almost any round, flat scavenged object for this purpose (an old paint can lid, for example, works well). Whatever you choose, drill a hole in its center . . . insert the bolt . . . and fasten the assembly in place with a wing nut. Now, attach a length of rope or clothesline to the pail's handle . . . and — presto — you're done.

To regulate the flow of feed, simply adjust the nuts above and below the pan . . . the closer the trough is to the bottom of the pail, the slower the flow will be. In any case, though, be sure that the two nuts clamp the pan very tightly . . . otherwise, it'll list to one side and cause an uneven distribution of grain.

Just hang your feeder at an appropriate height (one rule of thumb is to keep the outer lip at the level of your birds' backs) . . . and let your chickens dine to their hearts' delight. They'll enjoy having a ready supply of mash available, and I think you'll like the way your hanging feeder prevents waste ... and improves your birds' mealtime politesse!

EDITOR'S NOTE: You'll find yet another nifty idea for making a feeder from a five-gallon plastic bucket on page 110 of MOTHER NO. 50. For information on ordering back issues, see page 180.





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Issue # 50 - March/April 1978

ERIC E. WIGGIN'S NO-WASTE POULTRY FEEDER ... THAT YOU CAN BUILD FOR FREE!



The trough poultry feeders sold in hardware and feed and seed stores are expensive. They're also wasteful: They collect droppings, and birds can- and do-scratch both homegrown grain and store-bought mash out of the best of 'em.

Winston-Salem, North Carolina's Eric E. Wiggin doesn't think today's homesteaders and raisers of backyard flocks of chickens should put up with that situation. Not when it's so easy to recycle a few free

and/or scrounged-up materials into hanging poultry feeders that [1] do not collect droppings and [2] do not waste feed.

"I make my birds' feeders out of metal or heavy plastic five-gallon paint or food pails," says Mr. Wiggin. "The containers can be picked up free from painting contractors, restaurants, bakeries, and other commercial food operations in almost any part of the country. You'll need one of the buckets for each feeder you want to build ... plus twelve 1/8" X 1/2" stove bolts, a few feet of clothesline, and a 1"X5" dowel whittled from scrap wood."

MOTHER's Emerson Smyers recently followed Eric's directions for fabricating one of the feeders. First he thoroughly cleaned and removed the bail and lid from -a plastic five-gallon paint bucket that was just taking up space in our research shop.

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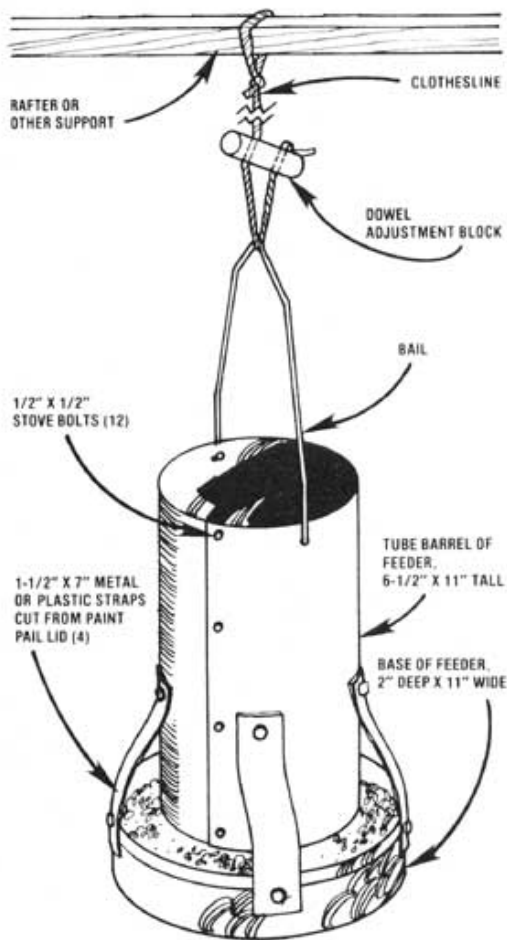
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Then he measured two inches up from the bucket's bottom and made a clean cut all the way around the container's base. The bottom—complete with two-inch "rim"—was then set aside to serve as the base of the finished feeder.

Next, the "tube" which was left was slit all the way up the side. The edges of the tube were then overlapped, the overlap was trimmed off, and the remaining tube was drilled and bolted in four places to form a 6-1/2"-diameter cylinder. This cylinder would become the feeder's barrel.

Hey! This project was obviously going to be a snap. So Emerson moved right on to cut four 1-1/2" X 7" straps from the pail's lid. He also drilled 5/32" holes through each end of each strap (centered, and 3/4" in from the ends) and fastened them to the base with 1/8" stove bolts as shown.

Two 3/4"-thick blocks of wood were then placed in the bottom of the base to act as spacers, the barrel was centered on them, the straps were bent over against the barrel, and it was marked for drilling. After that, the straps were bolted to the barrel and the blocks were removed.

It didn't bother Emerson when he saw his feeder's bolted-on barrel settle somewhat into its base when the spacer blocks were taken out. He knew that later—when he'd filled the feeder and hung it up in the chicken house—the base would "float" far enough beneath the hopper for mash or pellets to gravity-feed down and out to its rim where the poultry could get it.

The feeder was almost finished. Emerson had only to drill new holes near its top for reinstallation of the original bail (this was necessary because, after the pail's sides were overlapped to form a smaller barrel, its old bail holes were no longer directly opposite each other). The bail was then bent to fit, put in place, and its ends were crimped so it couldn't come off.

Finally, two holes (each just large enough for a clothesline to barely slip through) were drilled (1/2" in from each end) in a 1"-diameter, 4"-long piece of wood. Emerson cut the rope about two feet longer than it needed to be to reach from a rafter in his backyard chickenhouse to the feeder's bail, when the new unit was placed on the building's floor. Then he assembled the rope, bail, and adjustment block as shown until the feeder was suspended just high enough off the floor for his chickens to eat from it easily ... but not scratch out or mess in its contents. (The weight of the feeder kept the block from slipping.)

After that it was easy—as the birds grew, litter piled up in the house, the building was cleaned, etc.—to raise or lower the feeder from time to time so that the chickens always had to reach up a little to eat out of it.

Final verdict? Eric E. Wiggin's no-cost, no-waste poultry feeder design works so well ... that Emerson has now built a second one! And he says that he wouldn't be without both his Wiggin feeders today! There ain't no better testimonial than that.

