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## How do breeders Quarantine their birds?

Show birds are naturally "quarantined".

Shared to YEPA by:

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This is a small glimpse into what some of us do, but 100 breeders/exhibitors may have 50 different or unique ways of getting the job done. In late August through early September, grow out birds that have shown promise are put up, in conditioning pens/cages up front in a separate building. The pens are small to condition the bird to this new environment. The birds are kept closer to eye level to better judge their type and temperament for displaying themselves. They get handled and the smaller cages help with that.

The breeders and other stock are left out back, behind the barn where they'll remain until breeding season in late winter/early spring. Anything from the show string that might get promoted to the breeder group won't be put into single mating pens (yes, we single/stud mate) until late February, at the earliest, so "quarantining" is a natural function or result of what most breeder/exhibitors do all the time in raising, conditioning, prepping, and breeding exhibition poultry.

We don't think of birds nearly as much in "flock" terms or "the chicken coop" terms, but small groupings of grow out birds and our eyes see individual birds through decades of familiarity with poultry. We separate chicks as soon as we can sex at 6 weeks. Males don't run with females, ever, and we don't flock mate.

When birds are taken to a show, they return to these upfront holding pens. If you've been around poultry for almost 60 years, your eye catches the least thing "off" with any bird. This isn't just about watching birds from a show, but all the time, with all the birds. It's as natural as breathing. The slightest limp, the smallest detail in behavior, the least bit of something off with a bird is spotted. We handle the bird before, during, while and after it's shown.

We work hard and spend money all year on this hobby for our 4 or 5 favorite shows, which for me includes Central Indiana, the Ohio National, the Appalachian Classic and the Dixie Classic in Knoxville. That's 5 shows over a 7-week period. It's the Season. It's wonderful, taxing, exhausting, rewarding and oh so enjoyable. It's a fun hobby, but it's still just chickens. It's about the friends and good food and fun times. The reason the hobby is fun is because it is forever challenging. One never arrives and the perfection is never achieved, it remains the carrot on the stick. There's always more to try, more puzzles to solve and more things to learn, even after all these years.