**Commercial laying hens**

**Poor old Isa browns, Hy-line browns or Hy-sex browns all basically the same bird just different brand name depending on who hatches them.**

**These girls are purpose bred to lay a lot of eggs in the first 18 months of their lives. Then they are culled once they become non-commercial. This is when most people buy them rescuing them from the battery farms, with no feathers etc.**

**Because these girls have laid so many eggs in the first 18 months they start to get a lot of problems. You will find they start laying eggs with no shell etc. basically they have physically depleted their bodies with laying.**

**These poor birds only have a short lifespan, at about 3 years old they start dying from all sorts of reasons but basically they have reached the end of their lifespan. Sometimes you can get them out to 4 or 5 when really looked after well but they wouldn’t have been productive for quite some time. There are always exceptions to the norm but it is rare to get any of these hybrids laying at 5 yrs old especially consistently.**

**These birds are bred solely to produce a lot of eggs for eighteen months, and they produce really well, some breeders keep them under lights to give them enough daylight hours to keep them laying thru winter. They have also been bred for easy sexing. They are colour sexed not vent sexed as in the old days. Vent sexing is becoming a thing of the past. Basically boys are white, girls are red but there is also a couple of strip combinations to take into account when colour sexing them.**

**Some breeders of these birds trim their top beak to try and stop them from feather picking and attacking their mates. These breeds can be very aggressive to each other. So it can be difficult to add new birds to mature ones. They become very territorial. The best way I find is to introduce them thru a fence so they get use to having new birds around before letting them out to free range together for the first time. Making sure that there is plenty of hiding spots, for new birds, if they become aggressive. This can take a lot of watching and adjustment and time (compared to heritage breed chickens) but not impossible to get them to mix. Or even better still put them into new territory or new pen that they haven’t claimed as their own.**

**These birds can be very human friendly showing submission the same as they show to a rooster squatting when you approach. They produce heaps of eggs in the early stages of life, but I cannot suggest them as a pet because kids fall in love with them and they die having a short lifespan or have reproduction problems very readily. They have been purpose bred to lay a lot of eggs for 18months and then finished .They have NOT been bred as a backyard layer or pet. They are a commercial hybrid.**