

High Carbo Mix Feeding System & Basic Motivation

You need this type of feeding for the imported birds (into Australia) such as the Janssen's, they are much bigger in size and strength than most of the old Aussie bloodlines, and thus they need different requirements to help them to race. Feed them too much protein and they will not be able to carry their body weight. This leads to losses and or poor performances, none of us want that.

The breakup of the High Carbo mix is as follows:

Wheat 10%, Dunn Peas 10%, Maize 45%, Saff 5%, Milo 5%, Barley 10%, Brown Rice 10% and Canary Seed (White Millet) 5%.

I implemented a new feeding system back in 2000 with Barry Hunt's WA advice and the following year refined it with Richard Clingan. I use straight Barley Sun, Mon, Tues, then half Barley - half Carbo mix Wed, Thurs and Carbo Mix Fri and Saturday. If races are getting harder I may use distance mix for last 2 days instead of the carbo mix, even add some peanuts! The birds will rest on Sunday, free loft if possible and bath.

Since using this mix the birds are very buoyant and flying well around the loft and in tosses and races. I flew a guy's birds when I first moved to Ballarat, he was at the bottom of his club and I stopped his birds for 1 week, wormed and treated for Canker and Resp. The following week he climbed to mid field, then the following week, 2nd and 4th then finally on the last week flying 350 miles won both club races and in a special race, 2nd and 5th with only a total of 6 birds returning on the day with 60 flyers from our combine and Geelong and some from Melbourne also competing, but I must add that I tossed the birds from 60 km each day and sorted out the birds which were not up to the required standard (country flyers have to toss shorter than their metro counter parts as the birds when released are in the heart of falcon country, where as in the metro some fanciers can fly over 100 kms without leaving the city! The metro flyers can also toss their birds with larger numbers, up to 6,000 birds, not bad for a training toss, if a falcon goes through the mob, chances are that your birds will not get touched, 1 in 600 is better than 1 in 60 or 600 for a club toss). He had 38 when I took over his birds and 19 when I started to race. I mainly only sent 3 or 4 birds to each race with 75% returns.

The idea is to basically take away loft flying (I refer to loft flying as making the birds fly for 1 hour in morning, and or maybe 1 hour at night) and use the toss as the work out. The birds will race home, therefore all birds are working and you will not have birds that will slack off around the loft and maybe hold the others back. You will also find that the birds will be switched on to race weekend a hell of a lot better than most other people birds. If you are able you can have an open loft for your birds, this is a great way to have them whizzing around the loft, taking off and landing use's more energy and muscles than just flying constantly around the loft. The birds also, I feel, develop a love of their home loft and will try just that bit more to get home. When cock birds are being the "Flapping Cock" around the loft this is a sign that they are happy and well in themselves, a good sign for racing! The birds are not forced to fly with an open loft, they are there to enjoy themselves and their loft environment. Of course as the distance gets over 350 miles you will have to add some more protein and fats into their feed and cut the barley down. Just try the new system for your sprint racing and then move the bird's back over to the heavier feed for the distance races.

Feed the birds, which stay at home the carbo mix, keep them on the system. This is where you need to assess difficulty of races and training for the birds and maybe even give just barley early (let the birds settle) with electrolytes, then you can give hand full of carbo mix with electrolytes. You need to watch how birds are recouping after race, but electrolytes (use 4 teaspoons of brown sugar and 1 teaspoon of iodised table salt to 4 litres of water) will be your main thought for the birds. The Barley will help to clean the birds system.

My distance mix is approx. the following.

25% Peas, 20% Milo 25% Saff, 5% Barley, 25% Maize. As you can see from this the Carbo's have dropped and the protein and fats increased. You can also use a standard heavy type mix the rest of the week and also for the last 2 days before race feed a high percentage of maize, you do this to lift energy levels for race that weekend. You can even look at on the day of basketing feeding Maize and Safflower, this will increase your birds energy and fat store for the coming event. The hard thing with the Australian system at present is the fact that all the work that you put in at home can be undone by the mix the birds are given while away on the transporter. Some Clubs and Feds are still feeding by far too much protein e.g. 80-100% peas while the birds are being transported to the long races. We must look at what is happening overseas and look at least giving the birds either a standard mix, or increasing the Maize and other beneficial grains for distance racing!

Mainly try the carbo system for your races up to 350 miles and see how things work out, it will be one part of the process, you need to work the birds and make sure they are healthy with some medication (barley will help keep digestion healthy).

I hope this system will work for you.

This is an email from another person who has started to use this system over the past month.

Dear Barry,

I have had my birds on your Barley mix now for over 4 weeks. The first week they were on the new system seemed to put off the birds. I suppose that is to be expected. The next week I came second in the club and 2nd in the Fed. The following week I should have won the club race but the rubber pulled out of the thimble. The week after I won 1st club and 1st Fed. Last week I came 3rd club and 4th Fed. I am very happy with the results so far as I am not in a good position off the South. This weekend and the next we fly Sydney, 320miles then Nowra 420miles. Your help is greatly appreciated.

Yours in Sport,
Brian Castle, NSW

Motivation!!

I use cock birds! Old Birds, as they say “you cannot put an old head on young shoulders”!

Pigeons don't know that they are racing! So, many times they just stay together (birds of a feather, flock together) until they realise that they are close to home, or even overflown, or even flown with the westerly wind too far east. By this time the birds are out of the running for a race position, so what we need to do is get them thinking what we want them to do! Most fanciers put their birds into races each weekend hoping to “get a good one”, why do this? By using motivation on your cock birds (especially the imported birds such as the Janssen's, birds developed on a motivation system) you will start to enjoy your racing more and perhaps start to win races.

System 1

Use nest boxes or box perches, which are 1' deep. The birds need to feel that this is their territory!

You can let them see the hens before tossing, then take them away to the toss point. Make sure the hens are in the loft to greet the cocks when they return. Leave the hens for a while and then take them away, next day put the hens back in for 5 mins then basket the cocks for a toss. Tosses only need to be 25-30, as you are training them to race, fitness is gained by flying around the loft.

You will find after about the 5th toss the birds you need to work with. If others are not clearing quickly they will not be what you want. Only race the ones, which race home to their territory and hen!

System 2

Another technique to motivate is 2 card board boxes along your back wall on the floor. Face them on the back wall facing the each side-wall, maybe a foot in towards each. Let different cock birds take them over, let them also take a hen. Now when racing is approaching, start on a Sunday, and each day start turning the boxes slightly towards the front until basketing day the boxes will be facing each other. By this day the cocks will be watching each other and fighting, don't let them injure each other. When they are basketed the last thing they remember is the other cock near their box! Try this on the tosses to see again see which birds will work under this system. You only want the cocks which leave the race point without circling with the race birds, thus you can get the jump on them by maybe 10-15 mins. That is how you can win the sprints! You will beat them at the release point, and not at the last part trapping at home, as all the other birds will most likely fly together!

You can also use nest bowls thrown into the corners of the loft, cock birds love to jump into them and start to call for a hen. You need to experiment with different ideas, to see what will work. Hopefully racing will be a lot more fun for you as well.

Yours in the Sport
Barry Trewin

© Barry Trewin 2004

