**TALK TO SPBS ON PREPARING FOR A SUCCESSFUL BREEDING SEASON MARCH 2021**

There are two main factors in preparing for a successful breeding season, these are: -

1. Preparing the birds
2. Preparing the breeding environment

. Feeding a complete diet long before the breeding season starts is very important.

. Not suitable to start supplementing calcium and soft food when we pair up or when the chicks hatch.

. The nutrition that the hens are able to put into the yolk comes from their diet long before they lay eggs.

My current feed plan is

ALL DAY

Dry seed mix available 24/7 Currently AVIGRAIN BLUE

MORNINGS

Soaked seed supplemented with Avian Vitaliser mixed with hard boiled eggs and mixed vegetables (Carrots, Broccoli, Parsley, Rosemary) that have been put thru a food processor and served with some Endive I grow at home.

I rotate Corn, Dutch Carrots, Wholegrain Bread and Spinach into the flights during the week.

I only feed this once a day so the birds don’t get fat, that’s bad for breeding results.

They need hard food before roosting as is breaks down gradually and keeps them nourished during the night

EVENINGS

I remove the morning feed trays and wash thoroughly for the next day.

I feed a TONIC SEED mix I make up which consists mainly of AVIGRAIN Small Parrot Mix supplemented with just about every seed I can get my hands on e.g., Chia, Quinoa, Kelp powder, Budgie Crumbles, Africana, Niger, Rape, Linseed, Quick Oats, Hulled Oats, Livamol, Tummyrite, Triticale etc. To a Kilo of this I add either Vetafarm Breeding Aid or Good Oil for birds.

As a treat every couple of days I throw a handful of Millet Sprays into the flights.

My water is changed every day and containers cleaned for the next day. I use Calcivet or Calcivite Plus which both contain Vitamin D3 and are Calcium Gluconate not Calcium Carbonate, this is stored by the hens much more efficiently. I also use Avian Vita Boost as well once or twice a week.

Just prior to the birds going into the breeding cabinet a nine-day treatment with Doxycycline for Psittacosis followed by a five-day treatment with Rob Marshalls MOXI T for the prevention of Yellow Belly. I also put a drop of Moxidectin on the skin at the back of the neck as the pair go into the breeding cabinet to keep the birds free of feather mite.

Nature has a major rule ‘SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST’ and Budgerigars are not exempt. Nature lowers the Immune system of the Cock birds at breeding time to eliminate any birds that she considers not strong enough to reproduce virile young. So only pair birds that are healthy and in top condition or prepare to have fatalities.

PREPARING THE ENVIRONMENT

CLEAN…. CLEAN…. CLEAN

By that I mean CAGES including PERCHES check these are tight, NEST BOXES including concaves, FOOD AND DRINK CONTAINERS.

Spray the inside of the Nest Box with a residual Insecticide to prevent mites, I like AIL from Vetafarm. I then add my Sawdust/Shavings and give it a spray as well. I repeat this once a week after all the fertile eggs have hatched.

I trim the vent feathers on the cock and hen. The hen when laying will produce large wet droppings which can adhere to the vent feathers then set into a large lump which will inhibit fertilization by the cock bird. When the cock consumes soft food for feeding to the chicks this can also happen and go unnoticed and inhibit fertility.

Handle both the Cock and Hen before pairing. Are they in condition? they should feel plump Not FAT and not skinny with a protruding keel bone.

There are a number of theories as to whether. The hen should go into the breeding cabinet first or the cock. Or one or the other some days later, or both together. Personally, I put them in together If they are in condition, they want to breed, its genetically instilled in them, they have survived in the wild for thousands of years by breeding in numbers too great to destroy.

Hopefully if one or a hundred things don’t go wrong you should end up with lots of chicks.