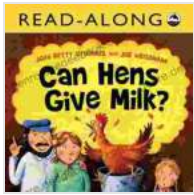


Can Hens Give Milk? Read Along and Discover the Fascinating World of Poultry



The question of whether hens give milk has puzzled humans for centuries. While it's a common misconception that hens produce milk, the reality is

that they do not. This article will delve into the reasons why hens do not give milk and explore the unique ways in which they nurture their young.



Can Hens Give Milk? Read-Along by Joan Betty Stuchner

★★★★☆ 4.2 out of 5

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Why Don't Hens Give Milk?

Unlike mammals, birds do not possess mammary glands, which are the specialized structures responsible for producing milk. Instead, hens produce eggs as a source of nourishment for their offspring. Eggs contain a rich supply of nutrients, including proteins, fats, and minerals, which are essential for the development of chicks.

Furthermore, hens lack the hormonal signals necessary for milk production. In mammals, the hormone prolactin triggers the secretion of milk from the mammary glands. However, hens do not have prolactin in their endocrine system, which prevents them from producing milk.

How Hens Nurture Their Chicks

Although hens do not produce milk, they still care for their chicks in remarkable ways. Here are some key strategies:

Incubation:

Once a hen has laid her eggs, she incubates them for a period of 21 days. During this time, she sits on the eggs to provide warmth and protection. The hen's body temperature helps to maintain the optimal conditions for the development of the embryos.

Brooding:

After the chicks hatch, the hen continues to provide care and nourishment. She broods the chicks under her feathers, keeping them warm and sheltered. The hen's body heat and protective wings provide a safe and nurturing environment for the young birds.

Guiding:

The hen teaches her chicks essential survival skills. She shows them how to find food and water, and she warns them of potential dangers. The chicks follow their mother closely, learning from her actions and cues.

Protection:

Hens are fiercely protective of their chicks. They will defend their young from predators and other threats. The hen's sharp beak and powerful wings can be formidable weapons against potential attackers.

Other Forms of Nourishment for Chicks

In addition to the care they provide, hens also contribute to the nutrition of their chicks through their own diet. Here are some ways in which hens

support the growth and development of their offspring:

Egg Yolks:

Egg yolks are a rich source of nutrients for chicks. After hatching, the chicks absorb the remaining yolk from within the egg, providing them with a vital source of energy and nourishment.

Crop Milk:

Some hens produce a substance called crop milk in their upper digestive tract. This secretion is not true milk but rather a milky liquid that contains proteins and fats. Crop milk can provide additional nourishment to the chicks during their early stages of life.

Foraging:

Hens scratch and peck at the ground in search of food, such as insects, worms, seeds, and vegetation. They share these food items with their chicks, providing them with a diverse range of nutrients.

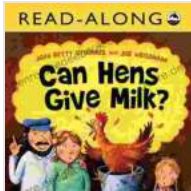
While hens do not give milk, they play a vital role in nurturing and supporting their chicks. Through incubation, brooding, guiding, and protection, hens provide a protective and nurturing environment for their young. Additionally, they contribute to the nutrition of their chicks through their own diet, providing them with essential nutrients for growth and development. The unique ways in which hens care for their offspring highlight the remarkable adaptations and behaviors within the avian world.

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