

Frequently Asked Questions

The following information has been gathered from various sources and results may vary. Individual preference or situation may require different equipment or setups. Transportation, coop relocation, introduction of new poultry, weather, change in feed or other variables can influence results in production.

Thoroughly research each breed you may consider when starting a new flock or when adding to your current flock. It is recommended to have all equipment and supplies needed prior to acquiring poultry and to understand the inherent risks associated with purchasing and raising live poultry.

Consider the climate in the area, city ordinances, permit requirements, property that the poultry will be housed on, will you be keeping your flock in a coop (house with attached run), free-ranging or a combination of the two methods. Is there a desire for pets, eggs, or a need for meat production? What would be best for my situation, what types of breeds will fit in with my flock goals?

What is a (Started) Pullet?

A female chicken between the ages of six weeks and one year, which has not begun to lay that is prepared to transfer to a new coop without need for any special equipment or brooding care needed.

How many nest boxes do chickens need?

1 box:4 hens (1 cubed square foot) Most hens will choose a favorite and lay in that one or two, regardless of quantity provided or they may choose another location altogether.

How much roosting space do chickens need?

1 foot for each bird

What size indoor space does a chicken need?

3 – 5 square feet per bird. Indoor space should be dry, draft-free, and well ventilated.

What size run space does a chicken need?

10 – 15 square feet per bird. A fully enclosed run will provide the best protection from predators digging underneath, entering from the sides and above or from the air.

What do chickens need in the run area?

Clean, fresh water and feed offered at shoulder height of youngest birds.

Dirt bathing area with sand will help keep feathers clean and provided needed grit.

During the summer months, provide a shallow dish of water for wading (1 – 4 inches deep) and overhead shade for the hottest part of the day and wet down dirt bathing area.

During winter months, provide wind block to encourage poultry to spend time outside.

What kind of feed do chickens need?

Research indicates that until mature ages have been reached, birds are not ready to process ingredients in layer feeds. Gradually transition new feeds with current feed to gauge possible sensitivities over one weeks' time.

Six weeks old – Starter Grower Crumble Non-medicated (18% protein)

8 to 14 weeks old – Scratch Grain (Not to exceed 10% of daily diet), Grit (river sand in dirt bathing area)

18 weeks and up – Layer crumble, oyster shells (offered separately from feed mixture)

Do you have to have a rooster to get eggs?

If you need egg fertilization for hatching chicks (1 rooster: 15 hens), a rooster is needed. They can provide protection for free-ranging flocks but are not necessary for hen egg production.

How do you introduce new poultry to existing flocks?

When obtaining new poultry from multiple sources, the best practice is to keep in a separate coop, with a distance of 36 foot from your existing flock but within view for a minimum of two weeks, preferably up to four weeks. Add younger pullets when they are close to the same size as the existing flock. Place new birds in the chicken house at night after the existing flock has roosted for the night and open the chicken house early in the morning when you are able to supervise through the day.

What additional items are good to have available?

Immune booster – Durvet Vitamins and Electrolytes (as needed, in addition to fresh water)

Antiseptic – Dr. Naylor Blu-Kote