

# Raising Chickens –Teacher information

Chickens can provide meat and eggs. Chicken meat and eggs are good sources of protein for a healthy diet. Children and adults need protein for growth and other important functions in the body. Protein helps build, repair and maintain our muscles. Chickens can also be good sources of income. Families can sell chickens, eggs and egg products (cakes, bread etc.).

## Chicken breeds

Village chickens are dual-purpose chickens, good for both laying eggs and meat. A manageable number of chickens for families are nine chickens and one cockerel. This will give enough stock to breed layers to lay eggs and cockerels for meat.

## Chicken housing

Chickens need a safe place to roost at night, away from predators and weather extremes. A chicken coop gives them a place to settle in for each night and to lay eggs in during the day. The coop needs to be big enough for the chickens to move around freely, let fresh air and some sunlight in and be easily cleaned.

## Daily and Weekly Chores to Keep Your Chickens Healthy

If you're raising chickens, whether for eggs or meat, you want your fowl to stay healthy. Healthy chickens need attention and care every day.

- **Round up the chickens every night into the coop.** Always count the chickens before closing the doors. Lock the door to stop predators and thieves from entering the coop.
- **Let the chickens out again in the morning after they have laid their eggs.** Keep the coop door tied open, to allow chickens access to the coop at any time.
- **Keep water available at all times.** Make sure the water is always clean. Chickens won't lay eggs if they don't have water.
- **Collect the eggs each day.** Use a basket or bag to collect the eggs. Store the eggs in an air tight container in a cool place. Put the old eggs at the front so they are used first.
- **Clean the chicken house often.** Chickens can get sick if their coop is not clean. It is important to clean out the coop, including cleaning perches, nest boxes and food and water containers.

## Making chicken feed

- **Chickens can eat vegetable scraps.** Give them left over food scraps.
- **Chickens need to forage and eat grass.** Let the chickens out during the day to forage for insects and plants.
- **To obtain better eggs**, 11-12MJ/Kg Energy, 16-17% Protein, 3-4% calcium, crude fiber 3%, crude fat 3% and with balanced amino acids are needed in the diet. The following recipe is the simplest diet that can be made from finely grounded local ingredient to feed layer birds.

To make chicken feed from some locally available feed combine these grounded ingredients

- 400g cassava
- 160g corn
- 135g fish meal
- 75g limestone
- 50g kaukau
- 48g cassava leaves
- 23g grass leaves
- 20g peanut
- 20g banana
- 2g salt
- 9ml cooking oil

## Using chicken manure as fertilizer

- **Chicken manure is a very good fertilizer for crops.** Dig the manure into the top 10-20 cm (one hand depth) of the soil before planting or dig in around each planting site, established plant or tree.
- Poultry litter should be dug into the soil about two weeks before planting to allow time for the litter to break down.
- **Do not put fresh manure directly on plants** as it may kill them.
- A 2L ice-cream container will hold 1kg of wet poultry droppings.

For further information, please contact:

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