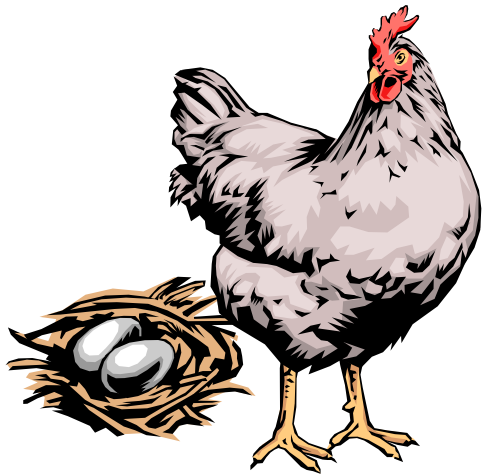


This leaflet is only a guide to the basics of keeping poultry.

The homing instinct is strong in a chicken, so by building a coop and keeping chickens, if they escape, they will always return to their coop.

Hens don't need roosters to lay eggs. So.... Take advantage of those chickens and keep a few for the healthy benefit of fresh eggs!



## BENEFITS OF KEEPING POULTRY



- **Eggs are a high protein, nutritious food.**
- **When properly managed, 4 hens may produce: 15-25 eggs a week.**
- **As a bonus, they generate good quality fertilizer.**
- **The satisfaction of producing something for yourself.**
- **Independence and self sufficiency.**
- **Fresh eggs every day.**
- **Recycling of household scraps**
- **Poultry can enrich your life with their beauty and behavior.**
- **Children enjoy observing and feeding hens and collecting eggs.**

For more information and advice on keeping chickens  
Contact the:

Department of Agriculture

P.O. Box 459 KYI-1106  
#181 Lottery Road  
Lower Valley  
(345) 947-3090  
Www.doa.gov.ky



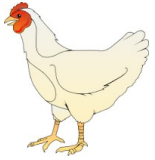
## CHICKEN KEEPING BASICS

Managing the  
Backyard Layer Flock



Department of Agriculture  
Cayman Islands Government

## INTRODUCTION



This brochure is a guide to give you some important basic guidelines as to the minimum standards expected of keeping chickens.

If you chose to keep animals you must check on them daily, provide competent care and management and have the knowledge and skills to ensure the wellbeing of your animals.

In addition, you are expected to keep them under proper control to avoid disturbance to others.

## FEED

Your chickens should have **continuous and plentiful** access to;

Cool, clean and fresh water.

- *Avoid galvanized containers*

Provision of feed of a type appropriate to the age and species of animal.

You can purchase scratch feeds and other chicken feeds at the Department of Agriculture and local feed stores

Chickens are also great foragers and will readily eat all the bugs in your yard.

Food scraps are also a great food, but avoid moldy and rotten food and foods containing too much fat.

Chickens also require grit to aid in digestion and a calcium supplement for strong eggs.

## HOUSING

In addition to effective containment, housing is also key in ensuring the welfare of your birds and should allow the expression of natural behaviours.

Although it is advised that you make the housing as large and comfortable as possible, as a minimum, the accommodation will be expected to compromise of;

- Minimum size of 2 square feet per chicken.
- A fully enclosed area that will provide protection from the elements and predators.
- A Roosting/perching area with at least 8 inches per bird.
- Nest boxes.
- Clean, dry bedding material.
- Adequate ventilation.
- Out door run, minimum 4 square feet per chicken.
- Place to scratch and dust themselves.



## HEALTH

You are responsible for ensuring that your chickens are free from distress, pain, injury and disease. Appropriate preventative and/or veterinary treatment should be available at all times. Call the Department of Agriculture at 345-947-3090 if you require veterinary assistance.

**To maintain healthy chickens and reduce odor problems, the run and hen house should be cleaned a minimum of once a week.**

Be on the look out for signs of disease. Some possible symptoms to look for indicating injury, illness and disease include:

- Coughing, wheezing, labored breathing,
- warts/scabs, swollen joints, loss of feathers,
- reduced egg production, thin egg shells,
- fever, abscesses or open wounds,
- paralysis, twisting of neck/head, discharge from nose/mouth,
- diarrhea/blood in stool, not eating/drinking, weight loss, retarded growth,
- lack of coordination, enlarged abdomen.

Chickens also need to be inspected for mites and lice.

Provide them with a dusting area as this will help them control these pests.

Diametaceous earth (which is really a mineral) is a natural, effective product to use for your chickens dusting area.

