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# Frequently Asked Questions

- ◆ Broiler Chicken Farming
- ◆ Layer Chicken Farming
- ◆ Improved Kienyeji Chicken Farming



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## **1. How do I start a chicken business?**

### **➤ Answer:**

Starting a chicken farming business requires some preparation. Follow these steps:

1. First of all, get some information about running a chicken business from any of your nearest chicken farms, institutions, or organizations like iShamba and Budget Mkononi.
2. Then, select a good location for your chicken farm. The house should not be too close to a residential area or a town.
3. Build a good house in the area you have chosen.
4. Buy all the needed chicken equipment once you have built the house.
5. Think about why you are keeping the chickens, is it for meat, eggs, or both?
  - a. Find out what people want to buy in your area.
  - b. Find out what the market needs (nearby markets, contractors).
  - c. Generally, both meat and eggs have good demand in Kenya.
    - For meat- Broilers
    - Eggs- Layers
    - Both for meat and eggs- Improved Kienyeji like Kenbro among others
6. Buy birds from reliable suppliers or breeders around your area.
7. Feed your birds with high-quality feeds.
8. Ensure your birds have fresh and clean drinking water. Change this daily.
9. Keep good contact with a vet in your area.
10. Keep a record of total costs and income from your business. Keeping records is very important for running a successful chicken farm.

## **2. What is the best laying hen?**

### **➤ Answer:**

- The Rhode Island Red Chicken is considered the best egg-laying chicken breed.
  - ◆ In one year, it gives about 250 eggs.
- There are also some hybrids and improved Kienyeji chicken which are very good for egg production too.

### 3. How much food do chickens need daily?

➤ **Answer:**

This depends on the breed, method of rearing and age.

- Generally, the average feed intake for a chick is 20-35 g while for growers, you need 70-100 g per bird and mature birds need 90-130 g per day.

### 4. How much money do you need to start a chicken farm?

➤ **Answer:**

The exact amount depends on various factors. Start with a small number of birds (e.g., 50 chicks) and expand slowly.



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### 5. With the small-scale producer in mind, how many birds do I need to keep to have a profitable business?

➤ **Answer:** This depends on a number of things including how much you expect to make by the end of the production period. Consider:

- The selling price of your product.
  - ◆ If you're selling live birds, you are likely to get a better price.
- Your input costs (feed, chicks, labour, electricity, fuel, loan repayments and so forth).
  - ◆ The lower these costs, the better your profit margin.
- Do thorough market and supplier research in your area and then create a simple business plan and outline the expected cash flow. This will give you a good idea of how many chickens you will need to keep in order to meet your goals.

### 6. How many hours of lighting are required for the laying hens?

➤ **Answer:** You need about 14-16 hours of lighting a day for the birds to lay eggs.

### 7. How many roosters/cocks do you need in the flock?

➤ **Answer:**

- Roosters are not a must-have for the hens to lay eggs.
- But you will need roosters if you want to produce fertile eggs for hatching.
- One rooster/cock is enough for around 10 hens.

### 8. Are there any loans available for chicken business?

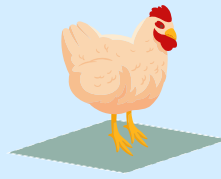
- **Answer:** Yes, but the conditions and amounts can vary depending on your location. Please contact a bank in your area for more information.

### 9. How much space do I need?

- **Answer:** Broilers need 1 square foot per bird while layers and improved Kienyeji need 1.5 square feet per bird.

#### For example

- For 100 Broilers = 100 square feet
- For 100 Layers = 150 square feet



Broilers - 1 ft<sup>2</sup>



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### 10. What materials do I use for the curtains?

- **Answer:**
- You can use used-feed bags or sacks (gunia) as curtains when brooding as they allow fresh air to flow freely within the brooder.
- Never use polythene bags as this may cause birds to suffocate.

### 11. What do I put when it is cold?

- **Answer:**
- It's best to make a concrete floor because it is easy to clean. You can also use murrum if needed.
- Provide litter to cushion the birds and provide warmth.
  - ◆ The litter can be wood shavings, chopped straw, rice, or coffee husks.
- Ensure there is good drainage around the house.

### 12. How do I know the sex of the chick?

- **Answer:**
- You can do Vent sexing using an experienced chick sexer when the chicks are one day old.
  - ◆ This technique is difficult and requires a lot of experience.
- Another way is looking at the feathers.
  - ◆ The feathers on the wings of the female will be a little longer and in a different pattern than those on the males.

### 13. What causes blood spots in eggs?

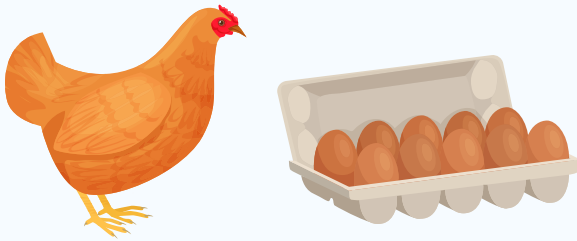
- **Answer:**
- Blood spots are a result of broken blood vessels in the reproductive system. When they break, a drop of blood leaks out and becomes part of the egg.

- The presence of a blood spot **does not mean** the egg is fertile or that an embryo is beginning to form.
- Egg processors identify and remove all eggs containing blood spots before eggs go into the carton. Sometimes one is missed, but if the blood spot is small, remove it and use the egg. For large blood spots, throw away the egg.

#### **14. How long can I keep eggs?**

➤ **Answer:**

- If eggs are well kept in a refrigerator, they should stay good and remain safe to eat for about 6 weeks.
- If you keep them in a carton, most eggs can stay good for up to 4 weeks.
- That means they may be sold up to four weeks after they are placed in the carton and the consumer will still have plenty of time to use them.



#### **15. How can you stop chickens from pecking each other?**

➤ **Answer:**

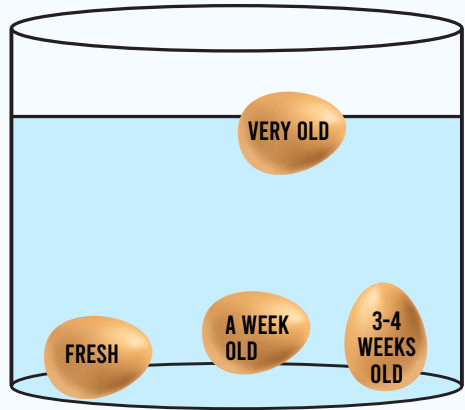
- Chickens peck each other when:
  - ◆ It is too hot, too crowded, there are too few feeders or drinkers
  - ◆ The air is stale
  - ◆ They are trying to find a leader of the flock
- To stop them, you must first solve the problems listed above. If that doesn't work try adding grass, hay, or lettuce in the pen.
- Sometimes, try to make the house darker. If all this fails, buy some products such as the "Poly Peepers" (they are like flexible blinders) for them to pick up.
- Do not debeak your birds at this stage as it is cruel and your birds won't be able to eat well.
- If one of your birds is pecked until bleeding, remove it from the pen. The others will begin pecking at it and eating the flesh.

## 16. How can I tell if an egg is fresh?

### ➤ Answer:

Just before you cook the egg, place it in warm water. If it floats, throw it away as it has passed the point that it should be eaten.

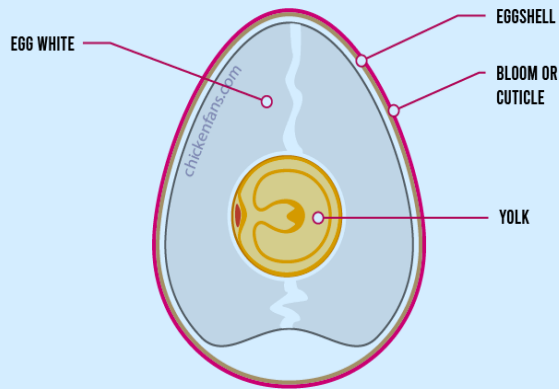
- The best fresh egg will lay on its side. If it stands on its end then it is still fresh and good to eat, it is just not as fresh as it would be if it laid on its side.



## 17. How do I clean an egg?

### ➤ Answer:

- It is important to keep your nesting boxes clean and to pick up your eggs daily. They should not be dirty.
- If they need a little more cleaning, take a towel with warm water and clean only on the spots.
- ◆ The best way is to spot-clean an egg so that you do not remove the bloom. Remember the bloom is protecting the egg.



- If it needs more cleaning, you can rinse it off with warm water, immediately dry it and put it in the fridge or use it right away.
- Do not use cold water as this will cause the egg to suck in the bacteria. Warm water on the other hand causes the inside of the egg to expand and press against the shell which will block the bacteria from entering.
- After you do this, you should inspect the egg for cracks and if it has some – throw it away as the bacteria has entered the egg.

### **18. What are the negative effects when sun rays shine directly into a chicken house?**

➤ **Answer:**

When sun rays get into the chicken house, it results in heat stress to the bird.

When the house is too hot:

- The chickens eat less, grow slower and produce fewer eggs
- The eggs do not hatch properly
- Some chicken step and kill others as they scramble to reach the sun

### **19. Do I have to sweep a chicken house daily?**

➤ **Answer:**

No! You do not have to sweep a chicken house daily. To avoid doing it daily, put bedding materials on the floor to absorb the faeces.

Such bedding materials include wood shavings and rice husks among others.

### **20. What causes birds to lose their feathers and develop “bareback”?**

➤ **Answer:**

- Chicken’s loose feathers when they are old
- The demands of egg production on her body cause her feathers to easily fall off

### **21. How can egg eating be stopped?**

➤ **Answer:**

Chicken will eat eggs if:

- The eggs are not collected in time
- The egg shell break easily
- You have fewer nests and some chickens are forced to lay anywhere

Identify the cause and address immediately. Also, remove the birds that often eat eggs as they may not just stop.



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aspects around  
farming chicken  
as a business

### **22. How can chickens be trained to lay in the nests instead of on the floor?**

➤ **Answer:**

- Have the nests in a location that is easily accessible to the birds.
- Frequently pick up eggs laid on the floor and place them in the nests.
- Destroy the nesting sites on the floor.
- Place fake eggs in the nests and move chicken from rearing to laying pens before they start to lay.

Watch



Saturdays 1:30 pm (English)

Sundays 1:30 pm (Kiswahili)



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