

# Chicken rearing

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## 1 introduction

Traditionally local chicken has been reared to serve the subsistence needs of farmers, and also given as gifts to friends as a token of friendship.

With the advent of the market economy and also the opening up of regional markets chicken rearing has seen a paradigm shift towards commercialization.

## 2 findings

This has also led to the increased rearing of exotic breeds of chicken to supplement the local breeds and meet both local and regional demand of chicken products.

For someone to venture into this project, the decision of whether to rear chicken for egg production or meat or both needs to be considered before any other.

This is largely determined by the available real estate for the project and the estimated payback period of the initial invested capital. Another issue to consider is the cost and frequency of vaccinating and feeding the birds.

Vaccination frequency varies by age and breed of the birds. Some chicken diseases are prone to certain geographic regions and care must be taken to find out what is common in your locale.

Intensive care for the birds is needed in the first two months after hatching to help the birds fully develop feathers this is a protein intensive process and the feeds must be selected carefully.

Young chicks must not be fed on calcium rich feeds as this can cause liver damage in their adult life. However calcium is an important ingredient needed for layers to make eggs with strong shells and also to develop strong bones that can support the weight of a bird.

Birds at all ages require constant intake of clean water to help keep them hydrated. Water can be supplied through water troughs constantly.

At 5 to 6 months of age, a hen is ready to start laying eggs if it has had proper feeding. This also means that it is ready for mating. The male birds will go an extra month before they are fully ready to mate.

On average a hen lays 2 eggs every 3 days. The egg formation process takes 24 hours and starts from the birds eye. This is why its important to maintain good illumination in the chicken run.

Care must be taken when constructing the laying baskets to not allow much light in as this will not attract the bird to lay. Eggs must be collected from their baskets soon enough as delay may cause the hungry birds to eat them or risk breakage.

Also accumulation of eggs in a basket induces broodiness in a laying bird and this should be avoided for maximum productivity.

### **3 conclusion**

In conclusion chicken rearing is an exciting and profitable venture and good for anyone with patience and a small piece of land looking for an alternative income opportunity.