



LIVESTOCK SERVICES

GUIDELINES FOR COMMERCIAL POULTRY KEEPING

LAYERS



All poultry keeping on a commercial scale should meet the required standard, set by the Livestock Production Committee, (LPC).

When building the chicken coop, consider the followings:

1. SITE

The chosen site should:

- not be in a flood-prone area
- be properly oriented to allow proper ventilation
- be more than **15m** away from any water source (flowing river, seasonal stream)
- be **30m** away from any dwelling house
- not fall within a residential zone
- be able to accommodate:
 - a standard manure shed
 - a feed store
 - a water storage facility
 - a tools' store
 - a staff toilet
 - staff accommodation (if staff is to reside on farm)

N.B: Always consider acreage for any possible future expansion.

2. BUILDING SIZE

The building dimension will depend on the amount of land available and the quantity of birds that the LPC has granted permission to rear. To facilitate the daily operation/activities inside the chicken coop, the entrance must be large enough to allow any vehicle inside the coop, if ever there is any need to, eg: for manure cleanout...

The height of a chicken coop must be **4.2 m- 4.8 m** high and **10.5m wide**

The acceptable amount of chicken on **deep litter** is **7 birds per square meter**.

The roof should not be less than **3m** high to facilitate proper ventilation.

The walls surrounding the chicken coop must be **30cm** high

3. ORIENTATION

The chicken coop should be constructed on the **east west** side to avoid direct sun rays and rain water inside the coop, always keep a distance of **2.5 m** between any other coop

4. OPENING

Proper ventilation through adequate openings along the walls is required to remove heat from the building and renew the air circulation in the chicken coop, but fly proof wire netting is recommended on all openings.

5. ROOFING

The roof cover must be connected with a rain gutter to discharge the rain water in a safe place. Rain water harvesting can be done by connecting the rain gutter to a water tank/reservoir.

6. FLOOR

A **4 inches** (10 cm) concrete is acceptable for the chicken coop floor; with a sloping of **3% gradient**. (It is not advisable to rear poultry on compacted soil only as it increases the risks of infection.

7. MANURE SHED

A manure shed is a small shed with concrete flooring and surrounded on 3 sides by well plastered retaining walls (not less than 120 cm in height) that houses all manure from the chicken coop. Manure should be regularly removed as it contains ammonia from animal wastes. High level of ammonia in an enclosed environment could be hazardous and affect production.

REARING SYSTEM USED IN SEYCHELLES

(1) Deep Litter

Deep Litter System: Wood shavings are used to as a means of insulation from the coldness of the concrete flooring and as an absorbant to the bird droppings. This should have a thickness of 7 to 10 cm and should always remain dry. In case the shavings get too wet, especially under and around the drinkers, or from excessing soiling from the birds, they should be replaced immediately.

Layers normally lay its first egg around **20** weeks onwards and the peak production will be around **26 weeks (or 6-8 weeks later)**. A laying nest with **30cm x 30cm x 30cm** should accommodate **5 to 6 birds**. The entrance of the nest can be partially covered to render it darker and more comfortable for the birds to lay. Nesting boxes should not be placed in corners of the coop, but in a location to facilitate egg collection.

ADVANTAGE OF THE DEEP LITTER SYSTEM:

- Does not require a high investment
- Birds movement are not restricted

DISADVANTAGE:

- Feed wastage
- Feed and water can be contaminated by the birds' wastes
- Unhealthy birds are harder to detect
- Eggs are not always clean

(2) Battery cage

Battery Cage System: A battery cage of **45cmx45cmx45cm** can accommodate 3 birds and are fitted with nipple drinkers and a horizontal tray for feeding called a linear trough. Birds are normally transferred from a deep litter system to a battery cage around the time for **the point of lay (18 weeks old)**.

ADVANTAGE OF BATTERY CAGE:

- Prevent feed wastage
- Better parasite control
- Food and water are less contaminated by the birds' droppings
- Unhealthy birds can easily be detected
- Eggs are cleaner

DISADVANTAGE:

- Birds may feel restricted

FEEDERS

Through feeders in deep litter

- A trough of **90 cm** long, with **10cm** wide and **6 cm** deep would be sufficient for **50-60** chicks at **4** weeks old.
- A trough of **90 cm** long, with a width of **15cm-20cm** and **7.5-10cm** deep is adequate for **25** adult chickens.

ALWAYS KEEP THE FEEDERS CLEAN.

DRINKERS

- **Fountain type drinkers** are ideal for young chicks up to **2 weeks** and one such drinker is adequate for **50 chicks**
- **Bell drinkers** (hanging automatic drinkers) are adequate for **50 adult chicken**

ALWAYS KEEP THE DRINKERS CLEAN.

FEED/FEEDING

<u>AGE (Weeks)</u>	<u>FEED</u>
<i>0-6 WEEKS</i>	CHICK STARTER
<i>7-18 WEEKS</i>	POULTRY GROWER/MASH
<i>18- 76 WEEKS</i>	LAYER FINISHER/MASH

Note: All feed are to be given ad libitum i.e. without any restriction

FEED TRANSITION

<u>PERIOD</u>	<u>FEED</u>	<u>RATIO</u>
FIRST 2 DAYS	CHICK STARTER & POULTRY GROWER	3 to 1
3 TO 4 DAYS	CHICK STARTER & POULTRY GROWER	1 to 1
5 TO 6 DAYS	CHICK STARTER & POULTRY GROWER	1 to 4

From the 7th day to 17 weeks, the chicks should be fed on poultry grower only. From then on, the birds should be switched to Layer finisher.

WATER CONSUMPTION

Clean water storage and continuous supply is very essential for the chicken, and also for the control of the chicken's body temperature, as well as the egg production (eggs contain 60% water). During hot weather, water consumption is very high.

Water storage facility must always remain clean. A water tank/reservoir is highly advised to prevent water shortage during the dry season.

RECORD KEEPING

This is important to keep the source and number of birds being placed in the farm and it helps in the financial management of the farm. The number of birds culled or die each day, the amount of feed/ water/ medication given, all help give an indication of the overall performance of the farm and allows the farmer to calculate whether a profit or a loss is envisaged. It helps in better managing the business. Statistics prove that farmers who keep records are better in managing their finances, compared to those who do not.

BIOSECURITY

This is a series of measures necessary to prevent diseases from entering the farm. It is often neglected but vital to avoiding farm production losses.

- Fence your farm and restricting access to authorized personal only
- Place a vehicle dip at the entrance of the farm (the disinfectant used should be broad spectrum antibacterial/antifungal/virucidal and should be changed daily)
- Place a footbath at the entrance of each coop
- Maintaining an effective rodent eradication program
- Maintaining an effective fly control program using baits or insecticide sprays
- Proper cleaning and disinfection of tools, equipment.
- Adoption of an all-in-all-out, whereby only one age bird is reared at one time in one coop.
- After each batch of birds has been removed from the coop, disinfect the entire coop, inside and outside, from the walls to the surrounding fence, then allow for 2 weeks rest period before re-stocking. This helps break any cycle of microbes from the previous batch from passing on to the new one.
- Clean all piping system and water tanks.
- All dead birds should be disposed by deep burial.
- Workers should start working with younger birds before going to older birds' coop and never the other way around.
- Careful daily visualization of the entire flock should be able to detect any unthrifty (unwell) birds. These should be immediately culled
- Prompt notification of the Veterinary Services should be done upon detection of any suspicious sickness or deaths.
- *N.B: If any abnormal deaths occur, please contact the Veterinary Services prior to disposing of the birds as there might need to conduct further examinations and sampling of infectious tissues from these animals.*



Livestock Services, Union Vale,
Tel: 4 61 14 64, 4 61 14 65, 4 61 14 66