

CHICKEN QUICK CARE GUIDE

For pride in their pecking order

Clever and
charismatic,
**chickens make
choice pets.**



Topflite

DID YOU KNOW?

There are more chickens in the world than any other bird.

Every local council in New Zealand has different rules for how many chickens you're allowed to keep and where. Best to check them out!

Hens start laying eggs when they're 5-6 months old and will continue for 2-3 years.

Battery farms get rid of their chickens when they're around 18 months old because it's cheaper to raise a new batch of pullets. Thankfully, there are lots of organisations that rehome ex-battery hens throughout New Zealand.

Chickens are very social creatures, so it's best to get two or three so they don't get bored or lonely.

However, these highly social animals have a clear 'pecking order' within the group and it is no joke. Hens will peck at and bully each other to find out who's boss.

There are lots of breeds of chickens. Some are beautiful to look at, some are regular layers and others have big personalities.

Egg shells are mostly calcium. That's why putting out oyster shell grit is so important. As well as helping digestion it's a good source of slow release calcium.

Foghorn Leghorn has been voted the greatest ever chicken character... but we have a soft spot for Camilla from the Muppets.

Chickens need a calm and consistent routine to their days. Stressful events can stop them laying or make them behave strangely.

Sometimes a hen gets dead-set on hatching her eggs even when there isn't a rooster around to fertilise them! This is called going 'broody'.

'There are more chickens in the world than any other bird'



Gear

Coop: With plenty of shelter, dark nest boxes and perching areas.

Run: A fenced off area for foraging, scratching, dust bathing and general roaming.

Water bowls

Soft bedding hay

High quality feed

Low fat and high in protein

Balanced with the necessary vitamins and minerals

Oyster shell grit

Treats and boredom busters



Care

- Coop should be regularly cleaned. Laying newspaper under the roosting area makes this easier.
- Hens need around 20 cm of perching space each.
- Nest boxes should be dark and around 30cm x 30cm for five to six hens.
- Layer soft bedding hay, wood shavings or shredded newspaper in the nest box.
- Feed a quality chicken-specific feed mix every day with some nutritious extras like silverbeet and dandelions.
- Chickens are omnivores so dinner scraps are ok. Give occasional treats like mealworms, Poultry Peckers or Chick Sticks.
- Change water daily to keep fresh.

Beware

- Loud noises, moving the coop and other stresses.
- Overweight or underweight chickens.
- Patchy or mangy feathers outside of moulting season - this could indicate lice or mites.
- Dirty bottoms, dull or cloudy eyes.
- Feeding orange peel, uncooked potato peelings or onions.
- Loss of appetite.
- Predators like possums, cats and dogs.

For a more detailed information on keeping chickens, see the forum at www.poultrycentral.co.nz



ABOUT TOPFLITE

Since 1975 our family owned and operated company has been making quality pet feed thanks to the rich soil in Oamaru.

From here we harvest delicious, nutritious seeds and grasses before carefully crafting them into meals, snacks and treats for birds, chickens, rabbits, guinea pigs, chinchillas and mice. Completely traceable and proudly grown in New Zealand, our specialist products help your pets soar to their potential.



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