

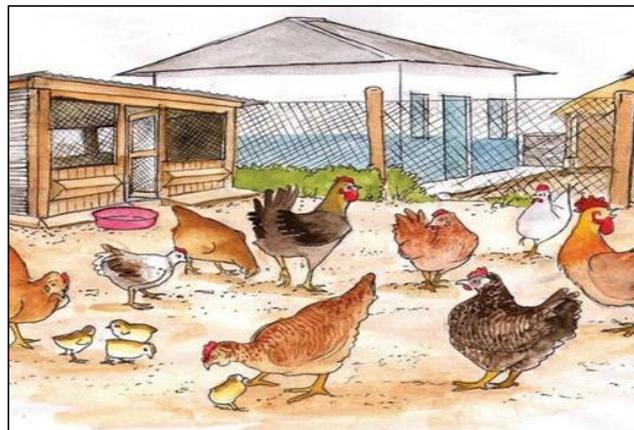
Indigenous Chicken Housing

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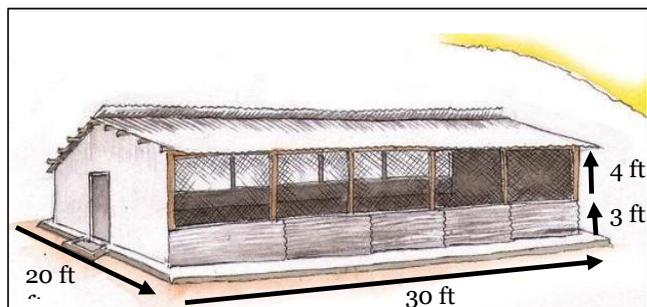


CHICKEN HOUSING

Housing protects chicken against predators, thieves, adverse weather (rain, sun, cold winds, and low night temperatures) and provide shelter for egg laying and broody hens. Suitable chicken houses are important for efficient production and management.



Chicken houses vary depending on availability of materials, weather and traditions. Type of housing should be based on cost, durability and usage.



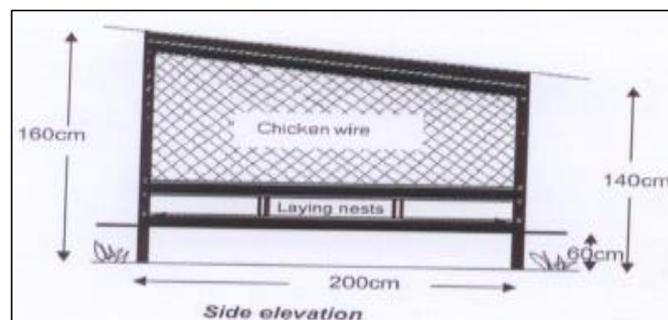
A chicken house (to accommodate up to 300 birds) set in an East West direction fully covered on the east and western sides and open on other sides

Building a chicken house

- Use locally available material like timber, off-cuts, reeds, sisal poles and thatch grass or clay bricks (as in the illustrations).
- Remove the bark from the wood to reduce parasites load.
- Chicken houses should have openings on the long sides for ventilation.



a) Chicken house made of mud, wood and iron sheets.



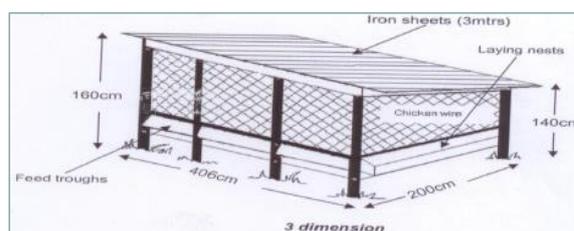
b) Plan of an elevated chicken house.

In addition a hole or ridge on the roof will ensure proper ventilation. Avoid strong winds (cold) inside the chicken house. High temperatures and humidity may cause deaths, a drop in egg production, low shells quality and reduced weight gain.

To reduce build-up of disease causing agents and parasites, the house must be accessible, easy to clean and have a foot bath at the entrance. Use slatted or raised floors to keep away droppings and avoid predators. Remove any sharp edged objects from the house to prevent possible injury to the birds and humans.

Stocking Density for mature chicken

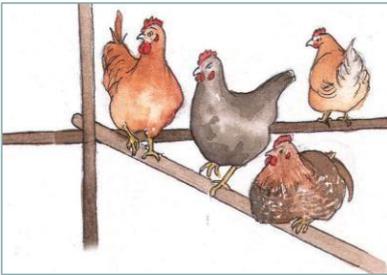
Age (weeks)	Birds per m ²
1-4	20
5-10	10
11-18	8
19-78	4



Other housing facilities

Perches

Perches are important for chicken to roost on and reduce pecking and fighting. Five mature chicken require 1 metre of perch. Perches are best made from rounded sticks which match the size of the chicken's feet. They should be treated with used engine oil or kerosene to keep away parasites.



A laying nest.

Nests

Laying nests make egg collection easy and help avoid dirty and cracked eggs. Avoid building nests on the ground or outside chicken houses as this will expose the eggs to predators and thieves. Removing eggs frequently from the nests is important to stop hens from going broody.

Brooding nests

Brooding nests should be placed in a quiet and dark place. Nests can be made out of clay, calabashes, cardboard, wooden boxes or baskets made of local fibres. Individual nests should measure 45 cm x 45 cm (18" x 18") (diameter x height).

Use ash, tobacco leaves or other pesticides to keep off parasites.

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