



Use of a drinker raised off the ground



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**FEEDING OF CHICKEN
WITH QUALITY LOW-COST
FEED RATIONS**



Introduction

Proper feeds and feeding practices are important in chicken production. Chicken feed is composed of nutrients that are essential for maintenance, growth and production. However, the genetic potential for chicken production may be limited by poor access to feed and water. The amount of feed consumed by layer-type chicken of different age categories under intensive production systems is shown in the **table 1**.

Table 1. Amount of Feed Consumed by Layer-type Chicken of Different age Categories under Intensive Production Systems

| Age (weeks) | Intake (grams)/bird/day |
|-------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | 12-15 |
| 2 | 15-21 |
| 3 | 21-25 |
| 4-6 | 30-40 |
| 7-8 | 45-50 |
| 9-15 | 50-75 |
| 16-27 | 80-120 |
| 28+ | 120-130 |

Chicks up to 8 weeks of age should be fed on chick mash thereafter gradual transition to growers mash. Layers mash is introduced when the chicken start laying and a laying percentage of 10 is attained. For different age categories, KEBS requires that the feeds meet the standards shown in **Table 2**.

Table2:Nutritional Requirements for different Age Categories

| Nutrient/age category of chicken | Chicks (0-8 weeks) | Grow-ers (8-19 weeks) | Layers (19 to 72 weeks) |
|---|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Metabolizable Energy, Kcal/kg (minimum) | 2,847 | 2,679 | 2,600 |
| Crude Protein, % (minimum) | 19-20 | 13-14 | 15 |
| Crude Fibre, % (maximum) | 3.0 | 4.0 | 7.5 |
| Calcium, % (minimum) | 1.0-1.1 | 1.3-3.0 | 3.5-4.5 |
| Available Phosphorus, % (minimum) | 0.55 | 0.45 | 0.40 |
| Lysine, % (minimum) | 1.00 | 0.60 | 0.69 |
| Methionine, % (minimum) | 0.40 | 0.28 | 0.30 |

Proper practices in feeding of laying birds on mixed rations

1. Feed birds in clean feeders suspended/raised off the ground to avoid contamination and feed wastage.
2. A mature bird needs 12 cm of feeding space hence supply enough feeders to allow all the chicken to eat at the same time.
3. Fill the feeders to half-full to avoid feed wastage.
4. Give 120-130 grams of feed per hen per day. Offer half the feed in the morning and the other half in the afternoon/evening.
5. Allow the birds to completely eat all the fine feed particles (premix, lysine, methionine, etc.) to avoid artificial nutrient deficiencies.
6. Protect feeds from rats and wild birds.
7. Keep records of what is consumed per day to monitor performance.
8. A mature chicken needs 6 cm of drinking space hence supply enough drinkers to allow all the chicken to drink at the same time.
9. Provide water *ad libitum* in clean drinkers.
10. Ensure that the drinkers are suspended/raised off the ground to avoid water contamination and spillage.