



TIPS FOR CHICKEN OWNERS

To house your chickens, you need to provide:

- 1. Protection from the weather**
- 2. Protection from predators (dogs, snakes etc.)**
- 3. Feeding and watering facilities**
- 4. A place to sleep**
- 5. Somewhere to lay eggs**

There are a number of different options:

Commercial type sheds, small individual cages for laying stock or intensive deep litter sheds for broilers.

The **free-range** method where birds roam at will during the day and are housed in simple sheds at night. The drawbacks are predators, birds laying eggs in hard-to-find places, a greater chance of birds contracting parasites like worms, difficulties managing diet and keeping chickens off the streets.

The **semi-intensive or deep litter** method is simply a shed with a floor covering of deep litter, somewhere for the birds to roost and an enclosed yard for them to exercise.

By keeping the litter deep and dry, bacterial action within the litter itself breaks down wastes and keeps the shed clean and hygienic.

Litter usually includes wood shavings, rice hulls, dry leaves, soil and perhaps some dry horse or cow

manure. Straw is NOT recommended because it does not absorb moisture and the stalks are hollow, allowing mites and other pests to hide and breed within.

Chickens are very susceptible to illness if they are forced to roost in draughty conditions.

Another important point to remember when placing perches is to keep them all on a single level. Perches placed above each other result in the birds on the lower ones being soiled and dirtied by those above.



You can lay wire mesh along the ground under the shed and protruding at least half a metre past the outside walls to prevent predators from digging under the shed. Pin it down using small tent pegs and cover with soil.

For best protection, lay a concrete floor (with litter on top). This also makes cleaning tasks much easier.

Allow enough space for each bird to be comfortable. Chickens are VERY territorial even in a large shed. Poor

positioning of feeders and waterers may result in less aggressive birds missing out on these necessities. The best solution is to allow the birds access to a run or some range outside the shed whenever possible.

Chooks can catch a number of serious and less serious diseases.

It is important that your birds are kept in clean, draught-free accommodation, fed a balanced diet and not kept in overcrowded conditions.

When bringing in new birds it is vitally important to quarantine them

for at least two weeks to ensure they are healthy and will not infect your other birds.

As with most domestic animals, if kept clean and well fed, chooks do not suffer a great deal of disease.

However there are many parasites and diseases waiting to strike if the right conditions occur.

Regular checks of the flock for insect parasites are a good way to prevent major outbreaks.

