



CHICKENS



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- ▶ Chicken production is an important rural industry that contributes significantly to Australia's economy.
- ▶ When you buy local produce you're helping to support Australian farmers and their families.





ORIGIN OF THE CHICKEN

- ▶ Domestication of the chicken dates to at least 2000 B.C.
- ▶ Their ancestry can be traced back to four species of wild jungle fowl from Southeast Asia.
- ▶ The Red jungle fowl is the most common wild species found today; it is considered the main ancestor of the domestic chicken.
- ▶ The chicken belongs to the genus Gallus of the family Phasianidae.
- ▶ Domestic chickens are simply classified as *Gallus domesticus*.
- ▶ The sport of cockfighting greatly influenced the domestication and distribution of fowl throughout the world.
- ▶ After centuries of selection and breeding we now have chickens of all colours, sizes and shapes with more than 350 combinations.
- ▶ In 1873, the American Poultry Association was organized for the purposes of adopting standards of excellence and establishing a way of classifying the various breeds.

A photograph of three small chicks nestled in a bed of straw. One chick is yellow, one is orange, and one is white. They are looking towards the camera. The background is a dark, solid color.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE CHICKEN

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CHICKEN TERMINOLOGY

- ▶ A male is called a Rooster. A young male prior to being an adult is known as a cockerel or cock. They guard the general area where his hens are nesting, and attacks other roosters that enter his territory.
- ▶ A female is called a Hen.
- ▶ A baby is called a Chick
- ▶ Between the age of 18 to 21 weeks old a hen is classed as “point of lay”. That means she is very close to being able start laying eggs.



SOME FUN FACTS ABOUT CHICKENS



- ▶ Chicken have an average lifespan of 5-8 years.
- ▶ Chickens make amazing pets because they not only produce eggs, but they also make great waste disposals. Your chickens will love you forever if you share your kitchen veggies and fruit scraps.
- ▶ They also love to scratch around and forage for bugs, worms, seeds, nuts, grass and even the garden weeds. Chicken droppings help to make egg-cellent fertilizer for your gardens and free-range chickens lay much healthier eggs! Yay!
- ▶ Chickens clean themselves by preening- they gather oil, using their beak, from a tiny gland located near their tail and then peck at their feathers.
- ▶ DYK chickens have a third eyelid? They use this transparent and horizontally moving lid to moisten their eyes and protect against other chickens' pecking.
- ▶ Hens produce an egg approximately every 25 hours and they can lay eggs completely without the help of a rooster!
- ▶ Hens will lay an average of 100-365 eggs per year. That's a LOT of eggs!
- ▶ They come equipped with egg-straordinary wings, but most don't fly well, and they cannot swim.
- ▶ In very hot weather, a chicken can drink up to 1 litre of water per day.
- ▶ The fleshy growth or crest on the top of the chicken's head is called a comb. They occur in quite a variety of styles, colours and shapes.

INCUBATION



- ▶ Fertile chicken eggs hatch at the end of the incubation period, about **21 days**. Development of the chick starts only when incubation begins, so all chicks hatch within a day or two of each other, despite perhaps being laid over a period of two weeks or so.

HEALTH BENEFITS OF EGGS

- ▶ They contain 9 essential amino acids
- ▶ One egg has 6 grams of high quality protein
- ▶ Help prevent cataract development
- ▶ Good fats - One egg contains 5 grams of good fat
- ▶ One of the only foods naturally containing vitamin D
- ▶ Promotes healthy hair and nail growth
- ▶ Cheap to buy and easy to cook





HEALTH CARE, PESTS & DISEASES

- ▶ Animal health, welfare and biosecurity are all important stages of the livestock production chain. If managed poorly each can have adverse impacts on productivity.
- ▶ Biosecurity programs for farming industries are designed to prevent the spread of infectious disease and contain disease outbreaks when they occur.
- ▶ Parasites and disease impact on all animals, including Alpacas. Animals affected by disease may not always show obvious clinical signs.
- ▶ Biosecurity is important at the national, regional and property level.
- ▶ Producers are governed by Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines. State and territory governments are responsible for animal welfare laws and their enforcement. These are enforced through animal welfare or prevention of cruelty to animals' legislation.



RISKS & CHALLENGES

- ▶ Like any primary production enterprise there are risks associated with commercial production of chickens. Some will be outside of a producer's control however experienced producers are usually able to manage these risks.
- ▶ Risks include the loss of vital export markets. The COVID-19 outbreak had a massive impact on a lot of our export markets.
- ▶ Disease and pests, it is extremely important that we maintain Australia's freedom from major diseases through strict quarantine laws and procedures.
- ▶ Here in Australia weather events such as drought, fires and flooding take a huge toll on our farming communities. They really need our support.



POP QUIZ

- ▶ The chicken's origin has been traced to _____ and dates back to _____
- ▶ The male is called a _____ and the female is called a _____. A baby chicken is called a _____
- ▶ Hens produce an egg on average every _____ hours.
- ▶ A chicken's average natural lifespan is _____ years.
- ▶ The incubation period of an egg lasts about _____
- ▶ Chicken production is an important rural industry that contributes significantly to Australia's economy
TRUE/FALSE
- ▶ Eggs contain 9 essential amino acids TRUE/FALSE
- ▶ Why do you think it is important to buy local Produce?



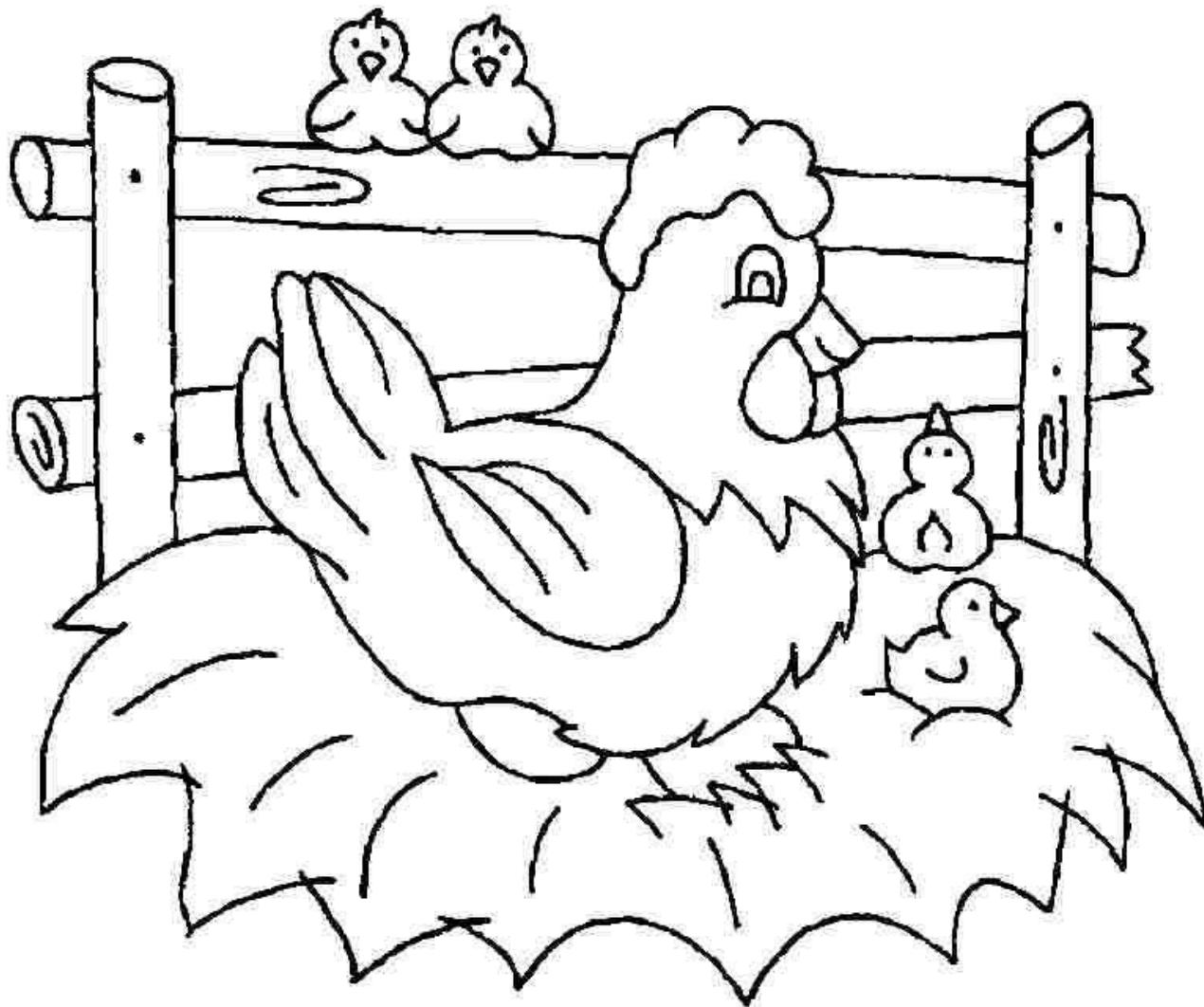
RESEARCH TASK

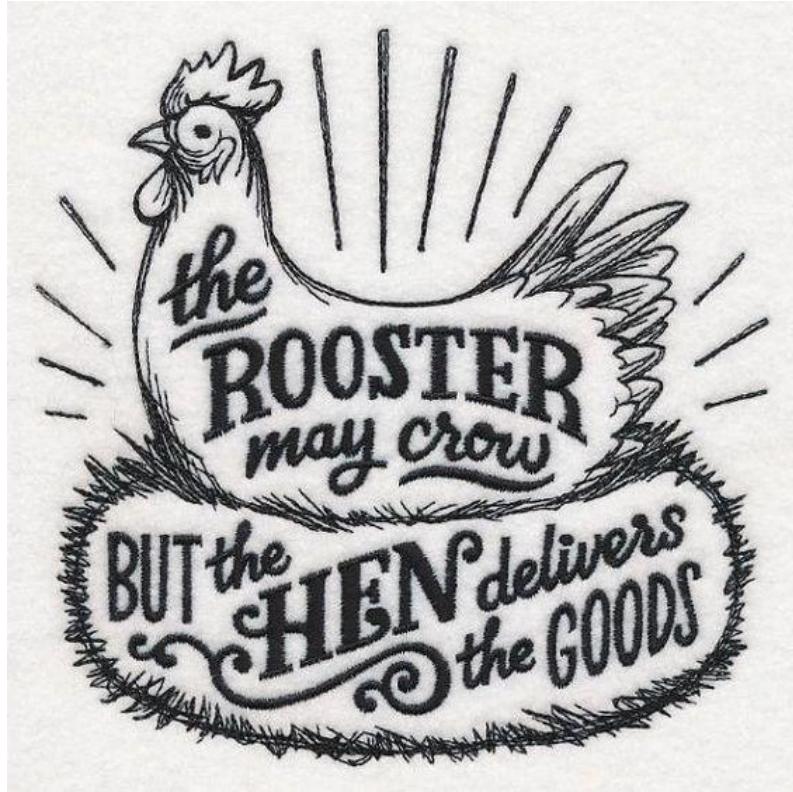
- ▶ Research how many eggs Australian's consume in a year
- ▶ Why are eggs different colours
- ▶ Research the kilograms of chicken meat Australian's consumed in a year
- ▶ Does Australia export any chicken products?
- ▶ What Australian chicken or egg producing businesses can you find

RESEARCH NOTES



CHICKENS





RESOURCES

Wikipedia, www.backyardchickencoops.com.au

QLD Gov Dep of Agriculture and Fisheries

NSW DPI