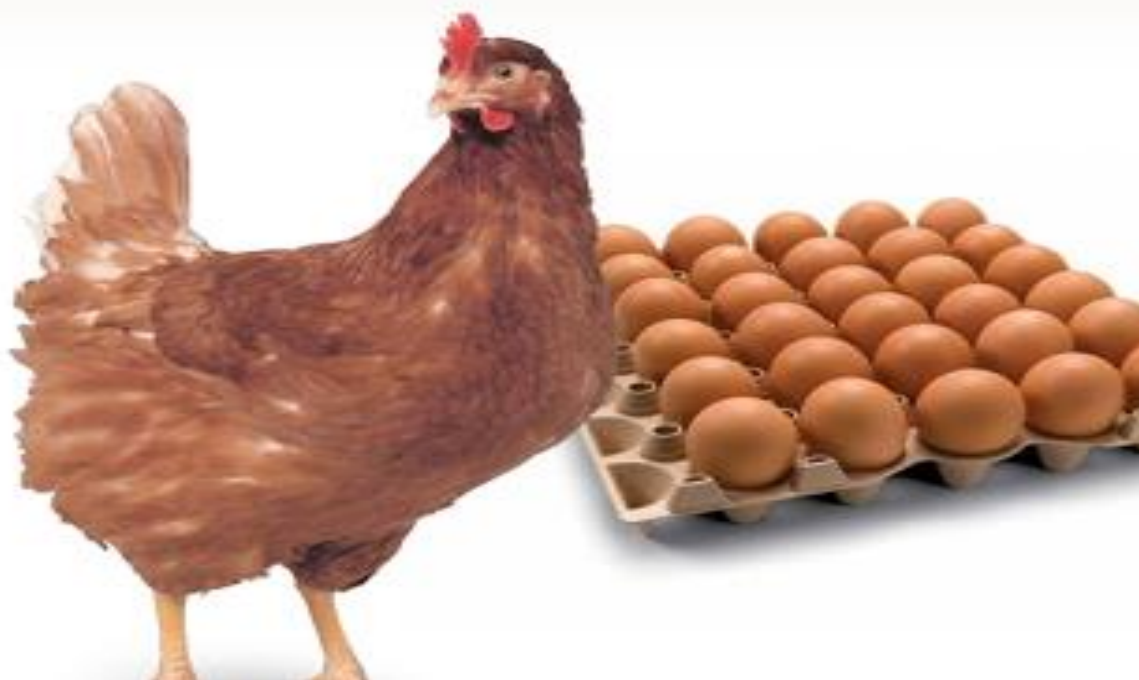




DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

LIVESTOCK RESEARCH SECTION

GUIDELINES FOR LAYER KEEPING



The applicant should be a registered farmer, having no less than a 1000 metre square of land.

LOCATION

The chosen site should:

- not be in a flood-prone area
- be more than 15m away from any water source (flowing river, seasonal stream)
- be 30m away from any dwelling house other than a designated agricultural area
- have enough space for the requested project
- not have too many boulders (big stones) on the project area
- not in a valley
- have tall bushy plants at the boundary
- be able to accommodate:
 - a chicken pen well built with its necessary facilities such as feeders and drinkers
 - a standard manure shed
 - a feed store
 - a water storage facility
 - a tools' store
 - a staff toilet & shower
 - if staff is to reside on farm, a staff accommodation or a watchman shed
 - sewage system facilities
 - a fence if necessary
- have 30m from each type of animal pens (ruminant/pig/others) on the land for a better hygiene & biosecurity system.

N.B: It's advisable to consider extra acreage for any possible future expansion, SAA should be informed prior to the layer chicken project in case there are other plans by the applicant for other types of projects in the future on the same parcel number or adjacent to it.

BUILDING SIZE

Dimension will depend on the amount of land available and the quantity of birds that has been granted permission to rear. To facilitate the daily operation/activities inside the

chicken coop, the entrance must be large enough to allow any vehicle inside the coop, if ever there is any need to, eg: for manure cleanout...

The height of a chicken coop must be 4.2m- 4.8m high and 10.5m wide

The acceptable amount of chicken on deep litter is 7 birds per square metre

The roof should not be less than 3m high to facilitate proper ventilation

The walls surrounding the chicken coop must be 30cm high.

ORIENTATION

The chicken coop should be constructed on the east west side to avoid direct sun rays and rain water inside the coop, always keep a distance of 2.5 m between any other coops.

OPENING

Proper ventilation through adequate openings along the walls is required to remove heat from the building and renew the air circulation in the chicken coop, but fly proof wire netting is recommended on all openings.

ROOFING

The roof cover must be connected with a rain gutter to discharge the rain water in a safe place. Rain water harvesting can be done by connecting the rain gutter to a water tank/reservoir.

FLOOR

A 4 inches (10 cm) concrete is acceptable for the chicken coop floor; with a sloping of 3% gradient. It is not advisable to rear poultry on compacted soil only as it increases the risks of infection.

MANURE SHED

It's a small shed with concrete flooring and surrounded on 3 sides by well plastered retaining walls (not less than 120 cm in height) that houses all manure from the chicken coop. Manure should be regularly removed as it contains ammonia from animal wastes.

High level of ammonia in an enclosed environment could be hazardous and affect production.

REARING SYSTEM USED IN SEYCHELLES

(1) Deep Litter

Wood shavings are used to as a means of insulation from the coldness of the concrete flooring and as an absorbent to the bird droppings. This should have a thickness of 7 to 10cm and should always remain dry. In case the shavings get too wet, especially under and around the drinkers, or from excessing soiling from the birds, they should be replaced immediately.

Layers normally lay its first egg around 20 weeks onwards and the peak production will be around 26 weeks (or 6-8 weeks later). A laying nest with 30cm x 30cm x 30cm should accommodate 5 to 6 birds. The entrance of the nest can be partially covered to render it darker and more comfortable for the birds to lay. Nesting boxes should not be placed in corners of the coop, but in a location to facilitate egg collection.

Advantages:

- Does not require a high investment
- Birds movement are not restricted.

Disadvantages:

- Feed wastage
- Feed and water can be contaminated by the birds' wastes
- Unhealthy birds are harder to detect
- Eggs are not always clean.

(2) Battery cage

Cage of 45cm x 45cm x 45cm can accommodate 3 birds and are fitted with nipple drinkers and a horizontal tray for feeding called a linear trough. Birds are normally transferred

from a deep litter system to a battery cage around the time for the point of lay (18 weeks old).

Advantages:

- Prevent feed wastage
- Better parasite control
- Food and water are less contaminated by the birds' droppings
- Unhealthy birds can easily be detected
- Eggs are cleaner.

Disadvantages:

- Birds may feel restricted.

FEEDERS

Through feeders in deep litter

- A trough of 90 cm long, with 10cm wide and 6cm deep would be sufficient for 50-60 chicks at 4 weeks old
- A trough of 90cm long, with a width of 15cm - 20cm and 7.5 - 10cm deep is adequate for 25 adult chickens.

Always keep the feeders clean!

DRINKERS

- Fountain type drinkers are ideal for young chicks up to 2 weeks and one such drinker is adequate for 50 chicks
- Bell drinkers (hanging automatic drinkers) are adequate for 50 adult chicken.

Always keep the drinkers clean!

FEED/FEEDING

<u>AGE (Weeks)</u>	<u>FEED</u>
0-6 WEEKS	CHICK STARTER
7-18 WEEKS	POULTRY GROWER/MASH
18- 76 WEEKS	LAYER FINISHER/MASH

Note: All feed are to be given ad libitum i.e. without any restriction

FEED TRANSITION

<u>PERIOD</u>	<u>FEED</u>	<u>RATIO</u>
FIRST 2 DAYS	CHICK STARTER & POULTRY GROWER	3 to 1
3 TO 4 DAYS	CHICK STARTER & POULTRY GROWER	1 to 1
5 TO 6 DAYS	CHICK STARTER & POULTRY GROWER	1 to 4

From the 7th day to 17 weeks, the chicks should be fed on poultry grower only. From then on, the birds should be switched to Layer finisher.

WATER CONSUMPTION

Clean water storage and continuous supply is very essential for the chicken, and also for the control of the chicken's body temperature, as well as the egg production (eggs contain 60% water). During hot weather, water consumption is very high.

Water storage facility must always remain clean. A water tank/reservoir is highly advised to prevent water shortage during the dry season.

RECORD KEEPING

This is important to keep the source and number of birds being placed in the farm and it helps in the financial management of the farm. The number of birds culled or die each day, the amount of feed/ water/ medication given, all help give an indication of the overall performance of the farm and allows the farmer to calculate whether a profit or a loss is

envisaged. It helps in better managing the business. Statistics prove that farmers who keep records are better in managing their finances, compared to those who do not.

BIOSECURITY

This is a series of measures necessary to prevent diseases from entering the farm. It is often neglected but vital to avoiding farm production losses.

- Fence the farm and restricting access to authorized personal only
- Place a vehicle dip at the entrance of the farm (the disinfectant used should be broad spectrum antibacterial/antifungal/virucidal and should be changed daily)
- Place a footbath at the entrance of each coop
- Maintaining an effective rodent eradication program
- Maintaining an effective fly control program using baits or insecticide sprays
- Proper cleaning and disinfection of tools, equipment
- Feed stores should be rat /bird proofed with proper ceiling
- Feed should be stored on pallet and not directly on floor and arrangement of feed should be such that will be rotated on a first come first serve basis
- Manure must be stored in a properly covered manure shed with a concrete floor slopping to an outside drain that is connected to the waste water disposal system or soak away pit depending on accessibility of either. Must be stacked at least 10 metres from the main pen.
- The tool store should be kept clean & tidy with shelves to store pesticides and disinfectant
- All medications should be stored in a fridge in a secure safe place under lock and key
- Adoption of an all-in-all-out, whereby only one age bird is reared at one time in one coop
- After each batch of birds has been removed from the coop, disinfect the entire coop, inside and outside, from the walls to the surrounding fence, then allow for 2

weeks rest period before re-stocking. This helps break any cycle of microbes from the previous batch from passing on to the new one

- Clean all piping system and water tanks
- All dead birds should be disposed by deep burial
- Workers should start working with younger birds before going to older birds' coop and never the other way around
- Careful daily visualization of the entire flock should be able to detect any unthrifty (unwell) birds.
- Prompt notification of the Veterinary Services should be done upon detection of any suspicious sickness or deaths.
- For human own safety and to prevent any spread of animal diseases, it is always advisable to wear a separate set of protective clothing on the farm
- The farm house or watchman room should consist of toilet, shower, small cooking area, resting room and a place to store their personal belonging like bags, overalls and boots.

N.B: If any abnormal deaths occur, Veterinary Services should be contacted prior to disposal of the layer chicken as there might need to conduct further examinations and sampling of infectious tissues from the layer chicken.

BACK YARD

Only a limited amount of 50 free range chicken/any other avian are permitted. They can be rear in 4.5 metre square of pen and need an area of 50 metre square as exercise yard. It's also advisable to limit the amount of cockerel and quail as their noise might be a nuisance to the neighbours.

For More Information

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