

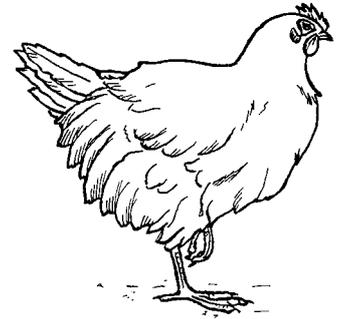
Meat chicken factsheet

Name: Meat chicken (also known as broiler)

Male: Cockerel

Female: Hen

Baby: Chick



Lifespan:

Naturally around ten years.

Chickens bred for meat are slaughtered at about five to six weeks old.

How many broilers are there?

Around 930 million broiler chicks were bred in the UK in 2012.

What's the point of keeping them as farm animals?

Chicken meat is now the most popular meat in the UK.*

How are the animals kept on farms?

Broiler-breeding farms:

Male and female chickens mate naturally and females lay eggs. The eggs are collected. Fertilised eggs are artificially incubated. When the eggs are hatched, the chicks are moved to rearing farms.

Growing farms:

Broiler chicks go to rearing farms when they are one day old. Most broilers grow up indoors, in large sheds. There are usually around 25,000 in one shed.

Meat chickens are bred to grow very fast. As a result, they may have painful leg problems and heart defects. When a chicken is lame, this means it is not able to walk properly and may have difficulty getting food and water.

Free-range:

A very small percentage of broilers are free-range. This means the birds can go outside and have more space to move around.

Organic:

Broilers on organic farms are also free-range and are fed organic food. Some farmers may also choose birds that grow more slowly.

RSPCA Assured:

RSPCA Assured chickens may be kept indoors or may be free-range. They have more space than ordinary meat chickens, as well as having straw bales, perches and a clean dry floor. They are also slower growing and are provided with natural light.

Did you know?

In 2010 for the first time, specific legislation relating to meat chicken welfare came into force. It includes stating how much space each bird must have. This is called **stocking density**.

* information correct as of 2015.