

Meat Chickens

Gallus gallus domesticus · Meat breed (e.g. broiler)

DIFFICULTY Easy–moderate
TYPE Poultry, kept for meat
PRODUCTIVE LIFE Processed at 8–14 weeks



SPACE

0.1–0.15m² per bird (grows fast)



DIET

High-protein grower feed, free-choice



WATER

Fresh daily, high intake as they grow



TEMPERAMENT

Docile, low activity

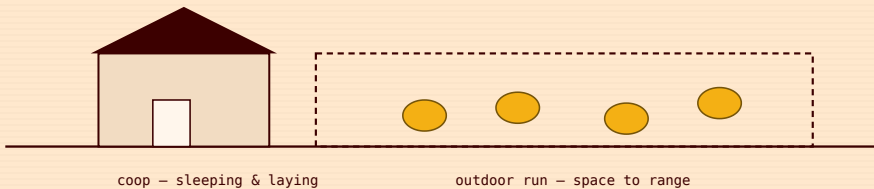


LIFESPAN

Kept only 8–14 weeks

01 Fast growth, short cycle

Unlike layers, meat breeds are kept for a short, intensive cycle — plan housing and processing dates before you start, since space needs increase quickly as birds grow.



02 Housing & setup

SHELTER	Simple, well-ventilated shelter; mobile 'chicken tractors' work well to spread manure across pasture.
FENCING	Predator-proof at night; daytime range can be a movable pen.
BEDDING	Deep litter (straw or shavings), refreshed as it fouts with a fast-growing flock.

04 Health & problems

- **Leg weakness** — from very rapid growth in some breeds; choose slower-growing breeds if this is a concern.
- **Heat stress** — fast-growing birds are heat-sensitive; ensure shade and ventilation.
- **Heart issues** — occasional in very fast-growing lines; again, breed choice matters.
- **Predator loss** — as with layers, secure housing overnight.

03 Daily care

- Feed a high-protein grower ration free-choice — these breeds eat heavily.
- Move mobile pens regularly if using a pasture-based system.
- Monitor growth rate; check for leg problems in very fast-growing breeds.
- Plan and book processing (or arrange your own) before birds are ready.

05 Production & harvest

PROCESSING AGE	8–14 weeks depending on breed and target size.
YIELD	Typically 1.5–3kg dressed weight per bird.
METHOD	On-farm processing or a licensed local processor, depending on your setup and regulations.
STORAGE	Fresh in the fridge a few days; freezes well for months.

06 Compatibility & considerations

GOOD WITH	AVOID KEEPING WITH	NOTE
Pasture rotation with vegetable beds afterward	Mixing with a laying flock long-term (different feed needs)	Check local regulations on home slaughter and any processing volume limits before committing to a batch size.