

Code of care for Chickens

In the Code of Care for Chickens you will find all of the steps you need to know about from raising chickens to how it is processed and how the processed meat gets to the store and everything in between.

Provisions for feed, water, and habitat

Chickens need feed, water and shelter. Depending on what age the birds are because chicks need chick feed which is a higher protein then layer feed which starts being fed to the birds once they get about 14-16 weeks old but if you are almost done with a bag of chick feed and it is like week 12 or 13 they can be put on layer feed. Other foods can be added or given as treats. Some good treat ideas are vegetables, rotten or fresh, corn cobs, melon rinds fruits or any table scraps even meat. When you mow the lawn or pull weeds, most can be thrown to them and they will peck and scratch through it. Things that don't make a good treat or can harm the chickens are citrus, poultry meat, raw potato skins (you can boil them and give it to them though). Only feed them corn in the winter or when the months get colder because corn generates heat and in the summer extra heat can kill them. A water pan or container needs to be full constantly and they need to have access to small rocks or grit for them to be able to grind up their feed.

The coop or pen needs to be well ventilated and have a fan to move air and be big enough for the amount of birds you have. Having a roost and nesting boxes will make "more space" in the coop then just the ground. Having different levels of roosts gives the chickens space to spread out while they are sleeping. A light on will help your hens have more of a "laying schedule" and will guide them back to the pen if they are let out during the day. Bedding should be laid down on the ground and in the nesting boxes for them to be able to lay the eggs without them breaking as easy. If you have the area to let them outside in a pen or just to let them run in the yard, they will eat bugs and it will give them a chance to fluff in the dirt and to eat rocks and fertilize and clean up the yard!

Health care and expectations

There are many different ways to treat a sick chicken it just all depend on what you believe is right to do with that chicken but most the time it is just best to cull it. Different medicine and homemade remedies can be made but they can be expensive or depending on what you looked up, it might have worked for someone else but not for you. Different breeds might respond to things differently. When a bird is healthy, their eyes will be bright and they will be at attention or pecking, fluffing or just moving around.

Handling procedures or expectations

When handling chickens it is important to hold their wings so they don't injure you or self or the bird. You can carry the bird by the legs upside down but not for long due to the blood will go to their heads and kill them, the ideal time to use this method of carrying is when you are having to move/carry multiple birds a short distance. When handling or moving bird in cages, when going long distance you want to make sure that the birds have enough space to move around. When moving birds a shorter distance birds can be packed a little bit tighter but still have a some room to move.

Transportation and harvesting practices

The most common type of bird that is butchered are broiler chickens. They are raised in confinement barns with full feed and water. These confinements hold thousands of birds an open floor layout for the bird have room to move around. First the broilers are loaded up on a truck and hauled to the processing plant which then they are unloaded and suspended by their feet on a moving line so that they are relaxed and less likely to freak out. The processing plant is dimly lit so when the chickens go through the rub bar which is there to calm them more so when they are butchered they are less likely to feel the pain. The process is done by a blade making a cut on the throat, this is the most humane way to kill them, if the blade doesn't cut all the way through, a worker is instructed to take care of that bird ASAP. They go on down the line where they are plucked, gutted and cut into pieces if that is what they are intended for. Then the meat is washed and chilled then packaged and loaded on freezer or fridge truck where then it goes to the store to be sold. All of the confinements, processing plants, trucks and meat have to pass many different inspections in order to keep producing or selling the birds and meat.

Use in education and research

Ways that chickens are used in education are classes hatch eggs in a incubator to see the life cycle. Chickens also help find a cure for the Yellow Fever. In 1951, Max Theiler was awarded the Nobel Prize of Physiology and Medicine for his works leading up to the production of a yellow fever vaccine. He experimented on mice, monkeys and chick embryos to develop the vaccine. Although yellow fever manifests differently in animal models, these experiments played a vital role in developing a successful vaccine. Chickens are also the closest living relatives to dinosaurs. From some fossils and evidence that have been found, Proteins taken from remains of dinosaurs confirm that the closest living relative to the Tyrannosaurus rex is the chicken. Many molecules show a very close similarity in both animals. Molecular evidence now proves that chickens and bird are the modern day descendants of dinosaurs.

Demonstrating and promoting a positive perception of animal agriculture

Chickens play an important role in agriculture because you can get 2 important things from them, meat and eggs. Chickens are also nice to have around your homestead or house because they eat the bugs and they are like little compost piles, you give them scraps and their waste will fertilize your lawn and you can use the stuff when you clean out the coop for fertilizer in your flowerbed or garden. Each chickens has its own personality and no chicken is the same. Chickens are good for people who want to get into the animal “business” because they are really easy to take care of and there are many benefits to having chickens.

Citations

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