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## **Chicken Husbandry**

### **Housing your chicken:**

There are a variety of chicken coops available, both wooden and plastic coops are fine, but plastic is easier to clean and less likely to harbour red mites.

It is essential that you provide nest box facilities and somewhere for your chickens to perch.

If the hens are kept with an attached run this will need to be moved onto fresh ground frequently.

It is vital to ensure the house is predator proof. Foxes are the most common predator; they can jump and climb like cats so a 6 foot fence is not guaranteed to keep them out.

Badgers can also dig under fencing and are strong enough to break into flimsy houses.

If you buy a coop, most have manufacturer's recommendations on stocking levels, make sure you have read this to ensure you are giving your hens enough housing space.

Hens love to dig and spend a significant amount of time foraging for worms and insects. A large plastic tray or sandpit is ideal for a dust bath.

Dust bathing helps keep the feathers clean and reduces the number of parasites.



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Ideally provide a covered area where the hens can feed and shelter during the day. Bark chippings can be used to create a dry area if it is not possible to move the run.

### Cleaning:

Wet bedding and droppings should be removed every day.

The bedding should be cleaned and changed every week.

The coop should be disinfected with a product against red mite every month

The following website has helpful information and sells a disinfectant which will kill red mite: [www.thechickenvet.co.uk](http://www.thechickenvet.co.uk)

### Food:

The average sized adult hen will need 100-120g daily of chicken pellet mixture. It is important not to leave grain scattered overnight as this will risk unwanted vermin. There are a variety of feeders that you can use, make sure they are securely attached and can't be knocked over.

If you have multiple hens, it is important to have several feed areas so that the lower ranking birds still have access to food.

### Parasites:

Hens can suffer from lice and mites; the most common problem is red mite. These mites live in the environment and as they are nocturnal, they can be hard to spot in the day time.



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They are more common in the summer; you can check the coop at night with a torch.

We recommend routine worming 3 – 4 times a year. Flubenvet can be used which is given for 7 consecutive days at a time, and this can be purchased online ([www.thechickenvet.co.uk](http://www.thechickenvet.co.uk)).

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