



**HINCHLIFFE'S**<sup>®</sup>

www.hinchliffes.com

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## Hen Keeping

### Facts & tips

- Hens are sociable creatures and prefer to be kept at least as a pair or larger groups.
- Hens which lay eggs are **not** the same as hens which are reared for meat which are called **Broilers**
- Hens are very easy to keep and should become almost like pets. They will become tamer as they get older and begin to lay eggs.
- We sell 2 types of Hen. One is a **Commercial** (also known as a **Hybrid**) and as the name suggest, the birds have been bred to lay eggs on a commercial basis. All our Commercials lay brown eggs and have a mix of browns feathers, usually with a mix of beige feathering.
- We also sell **Specials** which have been specially bred to lay almost as many eggs as a commercial but they look like traditional birds. This gives you the best of both worlds – plenty eggs from a bird which looks attractive.
- Birds are generally sold as “Point of Lay” which is any age after 16 Weeks. The birds will not lay until they are roughly 20 weeks old and settled in their new environment.
- Our birds are all vaccinated to industry standards to prevent from disease and infection.
- We at Hinchliffe’s have been rearing poultry since the 1960s and are currently the biggest independent pullet rearers in the North of England. We rear up to one million commercial hens a year on 12 farms throughout the north of England. All our specials are reared on our farm at Netherton, Huddersfield.



## Getting Started

The Equipment you will need is listed below and can all be purchased from Hinchliffe's:

- Hen House - with a nest box and perch and access to a run, or a
- Hen Ark which combines a house and run.
- Feeder – galvanised is best as its rust proof and
- Drinker
- Wood Shavings as bedding
- Hay or Straw for the nest boxes
- Grit - to aid digestion and improve shell quality of the eggs
- Layers Pellets
- The Hens!!



- When you get your birds home it is recommended that you keep them shut in the hen house or ark for up to 1 week so they are familiar with their new home and will be much more likely to lay in your nest boxes. You do not want them to start laying in your garden as once they start, they will always lay there.
- You can expect a chicken at the peak of its egg laying to eat 4ozs or 135g of food – so as a rule of thumb; our 20kg sacks will last 4 chickens for 1 month.
- You can feed the hens scraps of food from your kitchen. Grass and green leafed vegetables or salad are good for a nice deep egg yolk colour.
- A fox proof run is essential if you are not going to put your hens away each night and lock them safely in their Hen House or Ark.
- You can expect your hens to lay consistently for a year. They may then go through a moult where they stop laying and lose most of their feathers. They should then re-feather and start laying again after between 2 and 3 months, for a second term of lay.
- Hens will not lay for more than 3 terms of lay.
- You should expect them to then lay fewer eggs than in their first year of lay, the eggs will be larger and the shells may not be as strong.
- To extend the term of lay during winter hours, artificial light can be introduced to the hen's laying area to mimic summer time daylight. The total light should not exceed 15 hours.

**These facts are really all you need to know to keep chickens as they are amazingly simple to look after – once you've kept them and got those fresh eggs every day, you'll wonder why you never bought any sooner!**