

*Eggs on Legs
in Your Backyard...*



**Presented by Kirstie Henning
(City Chicks Sunshine Coast)**

Why Own Chooks...

**Nutritious Eggs - Garden Assistants –
Eat Leftovers - Great Pets –
Life to Your Garden!**



Why Own Chooks...

Cage Eggs and Barn Laid Eggs from supermarkets come from chooks that commonly look like this....



**Plucky &
Dulcie
September
2012**

Free range eggs come from your backyard from chooks that look like this....



Why Own Chooks...



Life to Your Garden...



- **Improve Soil Fertility/Natural Fertiliser** (*good source of nitrogen & phosphorus – place in compost for at least 3-6 months before applying to garden*)
- **Reduce Pests/Insects** (*chickens eat many bugs that may destroy your garden*)
- **Prepare Garden Beds Before Planting** (*chickens scratch in the dirt and turn the soil which aerates it ready for planting*)
- **Reduce Weeds** (*chickens eat many common weeds in the garden*)





What Type of Chook?

Pet



- Bantam
- Rescue
- Docile Breed

E.g.

1. Pekin
2. Silkie
3. Plymouth Rock
4. Australorp
5. Rhode Island Red

Garden



- Good Forager
- Bantam – Small Gardens
- Standard – Medium/Large Gardens

E.g. Med/Lge Yards:

1. Plymouth Rock
2. Barnevelder
3. Light Sussex
4. Leghorn

Eggs



- Hybrids (egg machines!)
- Heritage Breeds that lay more than 270 eggs/year

E.g.

1. Isa Brown (Hybrid)
2. Rhode Island Red
3. Leghorn
4. New Hampshire
5. Australorp

Meat



- Select specific breeds that are ideal for eating.
- Heavier Breeds

What Type of Chook?

PURE BRED/HERITAGE

- Seasonal Layers
- Lay from 24-36 weeks
- Longer Lives (i.e. ~ 8-15 years)
- Less Health Issues

HYBRID/CROSSBRED

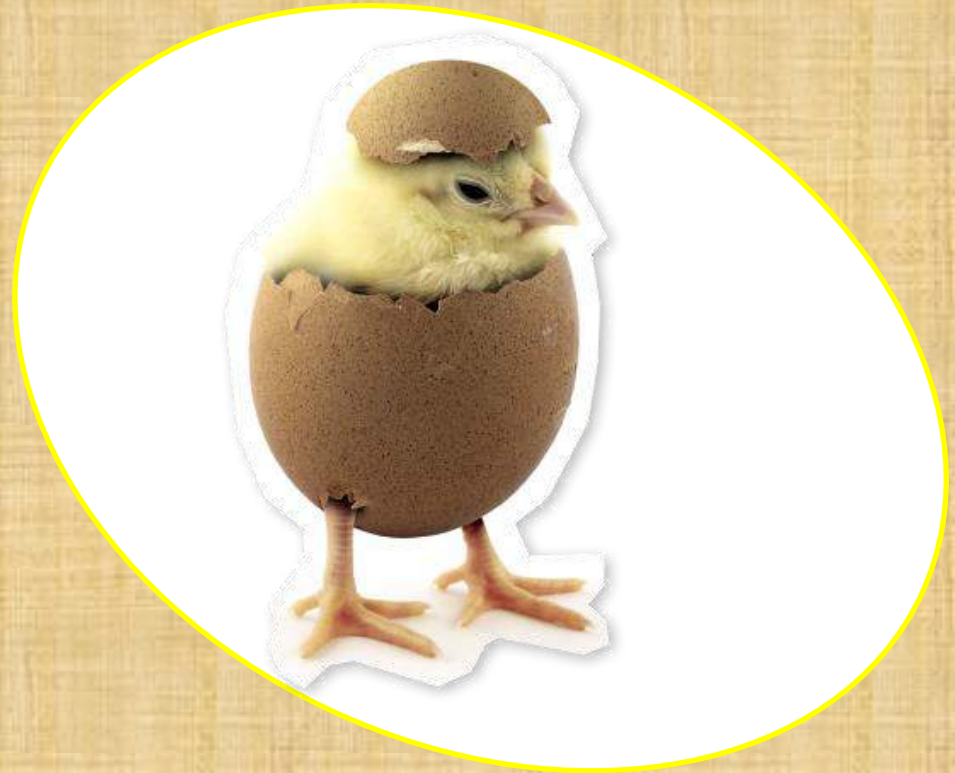
- Consistent Eggs for about 2 years
- Lay from 16-20 weeks
- Shorter Lives (i.e. ~ 5-7 years)
- May Have Health Issues



Bantams
v.s.
Standard

Interesting Chicken Fact

***The greatest
number of yolks
found in one
chicken egg is 9!!***



What Age?

Day Old Chick:

- Brooder Box with light 24 hours a day for 4-5 weeks.
- Food: Chick Starter

Pullet:

- 8-20 weeks
- Food: Chick Grower/Pullet Grower

Point of Lay (POL):

- Hybrid: 16-20 weeks
- Purebred: 28-36 weeks
- Food: Layer Mash, Grains or Pellets



3 Days Old



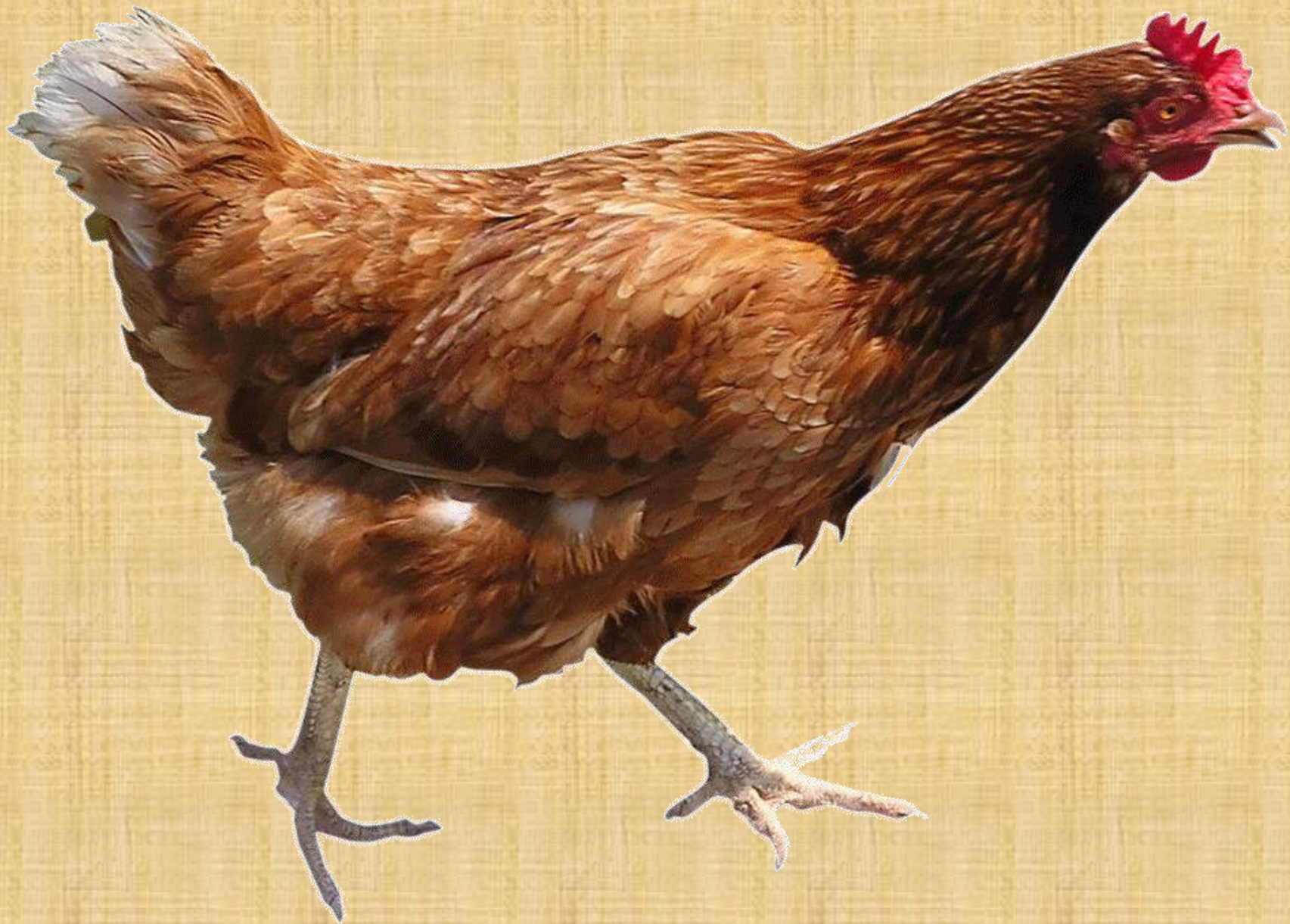
What Type of Chook?

Hybrid/Crossbred Options:

ISA BROWN

- 300+ Eggs/Year
- Medium Breed
- Personality:
Non-Broody
/Friendly/Bossy





What Type of Chook?

Here are a few heavy fowl purebred options:

AUSTRALORP

- 80-240 Eggs/Year
- Large/Heavy Fowl
- Personality: Quiet/Gentle



LIGHT SUSSEX

- 60-160 Eggs/Year
- Heavier Breed
- Personality: Quiet/Sedate



What Type of Chook?

Here are a few medium fowl purebred options:

NEW HAMPSHIRE

- 180-220 Eggs/Year
- Med/Lge Breed
- Personality:
Active/Quiet



RHODE ISLAND RED

- 120-240 Eggs/Year
- Medium Size Breed
- Personality:
Placid/Active/Alert



What Type of Chook?

Other purebred options: **ORPINGTON**



What Type of Chook?

*Other purebred options: **LEGHORN***



What Type of Chook?

Other purebred options: **BARNEVELDER**



What Type of Chook?

*Other purebred options: **PLYMOUTH ROCK***



What Type of Chook?

*Other purebred options: **PEKIN** (bantam)*





What Type of Chook?

Other purebred options: **POLISH** and **SILKIE** (bantams)



Type of Housing...

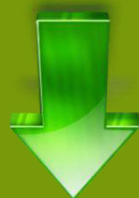
Moveable



Chicken Tractor



Free Range



Coop/Night House



Cage/Same Location



Coop/Run



Housing Tips....

CHICKEN COOP/HOUSE

- *Waterproof.*
- *Draught-free.*
- *Cool in summer, warm in winter (ideally insulate roof and walls).*
- *Rodent/Snake/Predator proof.*
- *Treat for mites and lice at least monthly (use a natural insecticide or a disinfectant safe for chickens).*
- *Perches adequate for number of chickens (allow 30cm per chook minimum).*
- *Nesting boxes with wood shavings or hay (1 box for every 4 chooks).*
- *A deep litter system is required by the Sunshine Coast Council. This reduces odours and disease (minimum deep of sawdust/dry matter is ~15cm).*



Housing Tips....

CHICKEN RUN

- *Minimum of 1 square meter per chook (ideally have much more space).*
- *Runs needs to be predator proof (e.g. use aviary mesh – concrete edging or lay galvanised flat mesh sheets under run area (at least 30cm out past outer edges with minimum 10 x 10cm squares).*
- *Run requires shade in summer and protection from rain and strong winds.*
- *Snake deterrents can be placed around the yard (unit placed into ground that sends out a vibration to deter snakes).*



FENCING

(if containing free range chooks in your own backyard):

- *Recommended height: +900 (nearly 1m or more).*
- *Chicken Wire or Galvanised Mesh Wire (e.g. dog fencing).*
- *Increase height if your area is renowned for wild dogs.*





Type of Food....

ORGANIC

STANDARD



Layer Mash

Pellets

Make Your Own*

*(*ensure you research this thoroughly as it is critical laying chickens get the right ratios of nutrients)*



Feeders & Drinkers...

**Keep food off the ground and dry.
Keep water clean and change every day.**



Type of Supplements....

Keep your chooks extra happy and supplement their diet with Fruit & Vegetables

Chop into 1cm cubes or if chooks aren't free range hang a basket of vegetables in their run so they can peck at it during the day – great boredom buster! Some examples are:

Kale

Spinach

Cabbage

Grated Carrot

Cooked Potato/Sweet Potato

Zucchini

Sweet Corn

Cooked Pumpkin

Bok Choy/Other Asian Greens

Apple

Pear

Grapes



AVOID raw potato/peel , tomato leaves, chocolate, coffee/tea, sugar, fatty/salty foods and any mouldy food. Most chickens won't eat citrus.

Type of Supplements....

- **Shell Grit** (*have available at all times*)
- **Garlic** (*sprinkle on food or in water once a week*)
- **Liquid Seaweed** (*stock grade – follow directions on bottle*)
- **Apple Cider Vinegar** (*lower pH of water to 4.0
occasionally*)
- **Kelp Meal** (*dry version – sprinkle onto food a couple of times
a week*)



Type of Supplements....

Various herbs/plants suitable for chooks
(plant around run/yard & let chooks decide when to snack on it):

Wormwood – internal & external parasites

Garlic Chives – kills nasties in the stomach

Nasturtium - internal & external parasites

Sage – health promoting herb

Dandelion – boosts immunity

Peppermint - internal & external parasites

Pyrethrum – natural insecticide

Yarrow – assists digestion & natural antiseptic



Wormwood



Nasturtium

Natural Hygiene & Medications....

To maintain hygiene natural alternatives can be used. However, if you have a major outbreak of lice, mites or worms then chemical intervention may be the best option.

- ***Neem Based Powders & Sprays*** v.s products such as Coopex and Pestene.
- ***Lavender*** in the nesting boxes.
- ***Sulfur powder*** in the coop and a light dusting under the chicken wings and on the vent.
- ***Garlic*** in the water 2 times a week.
- ***Apple Cider Vinegar*** in the water once a week (e.g. ½ teaspoon in 4 litres).
- ***Natural fulvic and humic acid*** in water twice a week.

Keeping Healthy, Happy Chooks....

1. Use a **deep litter system** in coop and remove visible droppings daily.
2. Keep **nesting boxes** clean and replace saw dust/hay weekly.
3. Clean **feed and water** containers at least weekly.
4. Use a good quality **lice/mite treatment** on the chickens and housing at least every month.
5. **Worm** all chickens at least every three months.
6. **Clean coop** and run with a suitable disinfectant at least every 6 months.
7. Follow some **natural health** procedures such as giving chickens garlic to reduce their worm load, plant shrubs that assist chook health, use apple cider vinegar in their water once a month (aim is to lower pH of water to 4.0). Research the many natural health options that will see your chooks in prime health online.
8. **Inspect the chooks** weekly for any weight loss, change in behaviour, scouring (dirty vent), bald spots (feather pecking), bumps on feet (bumble foot), lethargy or anything out of the ordinary. Chickens are hardy creatures but they get various health issues in their lifetime, many can be treated yourself, or by a vet, if it is serious. Keep any chook that appears unwell separate from the flock and it keep warm.

Handling & Managing Chooks...



- *You need to know how to **handle a chook** so you can inspect it regularly and catch it if it does escape. It is easier to hold them backwards with their wings secure by your side and your arm. Some chooks can be taught to “sit” on command.*
- *Chickens react to balance - use calm, slow movements and **guide them** with your arms out wide. They become familiar to tones and sounds - e.g. “chook chook chook”.*
- *Most free range chooks will head to their coop **just before dark** as a natural instinct (some hybrids don't do this) so you just need to go and lock the door before it gets too dark (predators such as foxes tend to hunt just before dark and on sunrise). They **wake on daylight** but some people choose to keep them locked in the coop until they have laid their eggs (let them out around 9am).*

Signs of Sickness....

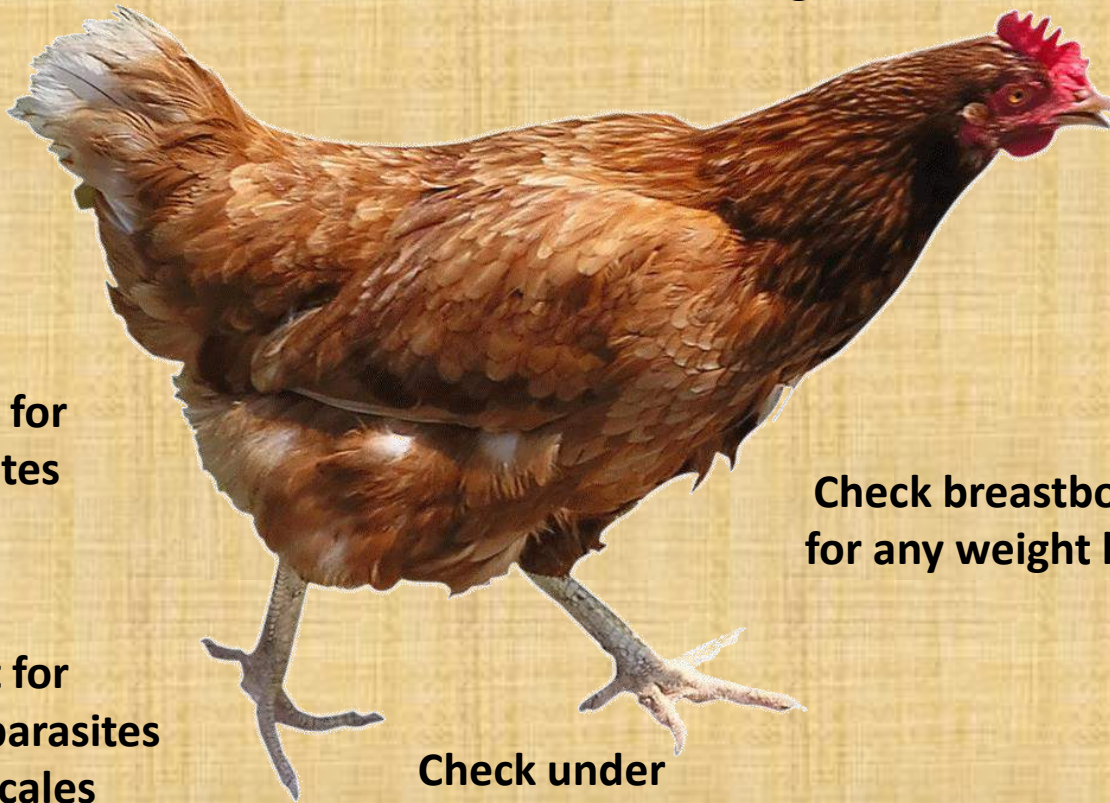
- **Not eating.**
- **Staying in coop when usually active.**
- **Bottom sitting on ground with rest of body held upright.**
- **Limping.**
- **Crying out.**
- **Panting.**
- **Diarrhoea/Dirty Vent.**
- **Discharge from Eyes or Nose.**
- **Sneezing/Coughing.**

Simple Health Check...

**Tail held
up/straight**

**Comb
bright/red**

**Clear
eyes/nose**



**Check vent for
dirt/parasites**

**Check breastbone
for any weight loss**

**Inspect for
infections/parasites
/rough scales**

**Check under
wings for
parasites**



**Bulging Front Section
- Impacted Crop?**



**White Segments in
Poop – Worms?**

What is this?



**White mass on feathers, moving
'bugs' under wings – lice?**



Red marks on timber in coop - mites?



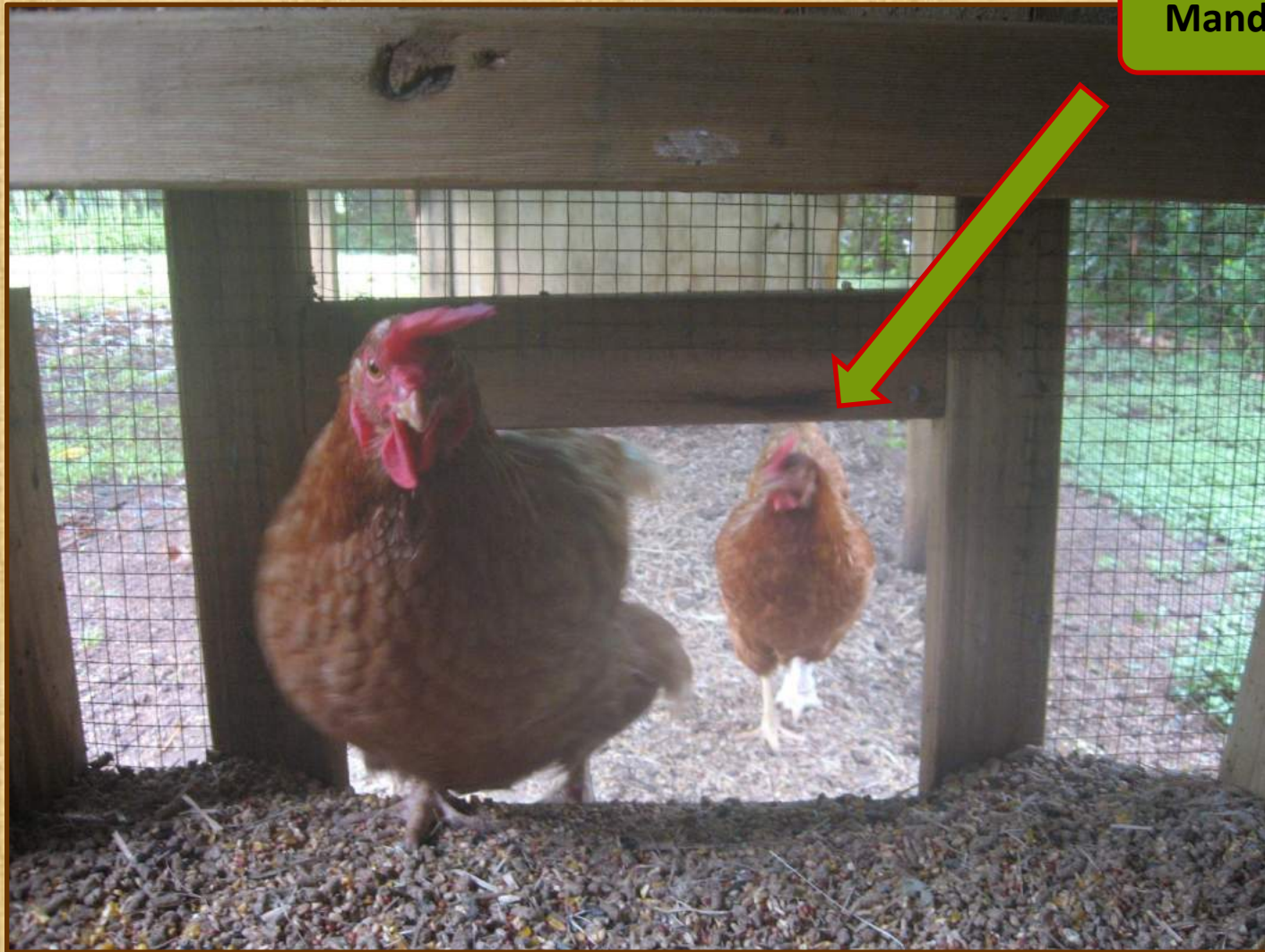
**Lumps on feet –
bumble foot?**

What is this?



**Off Food/Bottom on
Ground/Staying in
Nest Box?**

Mandy



Pecking Order...

How it is established?

- It seems to be based on a healthy, laying chook leading the group.
- The top of the pecking order has first choice on food and where to sleep.
- Chickens make over 100 sounds to communicate with each other.
- A simple stare from the head chook to another low ranked chook can say a lot!



*Watch the “**Private Lives of Chickens**” documentary and learn more about how chickens interact with each other.*

In Summary....

- 1. Purchase quality, free range vaccinated chickens.**
- 2. Ensure coop/night house is secure/warm.**
- 3. Hygiene in the coop and run is essential.**
- 4. Feed quality food that is not mouldy.**
- 5. Provide clean drinking water daily.**
- 6. Supplement diet.**
- 7. Do a regular health check.**





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www.citychicks.com.au
0409 872 860



- **PERSONAL** service & quality chickens.
- **HUGE** range of **HERITAGE** chickens, layers, day olds & ducklings.
- **FREE RANGE.**
- **All VACCINATED & SEXED** (unless baby bantams).
- **Australian made coops - no cheap imports!**
- **GOOD** range of organic feed and natural chicken health alternatives.
- **Home Delivery & Online Ordering** available.