

CHICKEN MEAT

WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

Broiler chickens, or 'meat chickens', are chickens bred for meat production. They are different to '**layer hens**', who are bred to produce eggs for human consumption.



600 MILLION+

Each year in Australia, over 600 million chickens are slaughtered for human consumption.



Are there WELFARE ISSUES?



THE FIVE FREEDOMS

When assessing the welfare of an animal, it is important to consider the 'five freedoms'.

- 1 Freedom from hunger and thirst
- 2 Freedom from discomfort
- 3 Freedom from pain, injury or disease
- 4 Freedom to express normal behaviour
- 5 Freedom from fear and distress

SOCIAL HIERARCHY

Chickens form social hierarchies known as '**pecking orders**'.

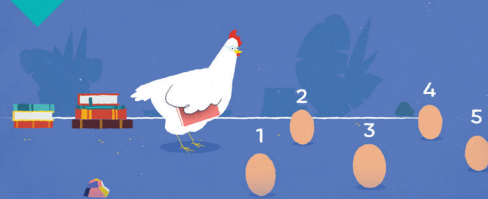


INTELLIGENCE

Chickens can count to **FIVE**.

They can use **reason** and **logic**.

They engage in social learning, and have **complex forms of communication**.



DID YOU KNOW that chickens can make at least 26 **DIFFERENT** meaningful vocalisations?

26



FAST GROWTH RATE

35 Days

7 Years



Selectively bred



Natural

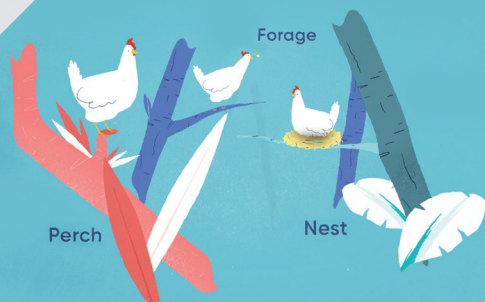
Due to selective breeding and diet, most broiler chickens grow at a very fast rate. Chickens in intensive systems grow to slaughter weight by 33–42 days of age. This is a very young age given that chickens have a natural life span of approximately seven years or more.

Growing at such a fast rate can pose issues for their young bodies. They may struggle to support their sudden weight gain, leading to problems with their legs, joints, heart and lungs. For chickens affected by these issues, it can be more difficult to walk and engage in normal behaviour (such as scratching and perching).

Chickens in free range and organic systems may take longer to grow, but they are generally from the same fast growing breeds as intensively reared chickens.

NATURAL BEHAVIOUR

Under natural conditions, chickens walk, run and fly. They create nests, socialise with each other, bathe in dust to groom their feathers, perch on branches and forage for food.

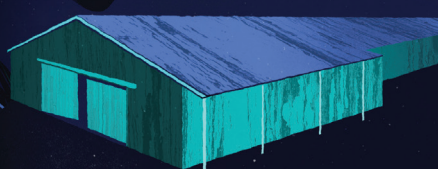


How are broiler chickens FARMED IN AUSTRALIA?

In Australia, most of the 600 million+ chickens raised for their meat are kept in **intensive 'factory farms'**, with less than a quarter kept in **free range** systems.

INTENSIVE FARMING

In intensive farming systems, producers are able to maximise the amount of meat they produce within their available space by housing animals in close conditions.



FREE RANGE FARMING



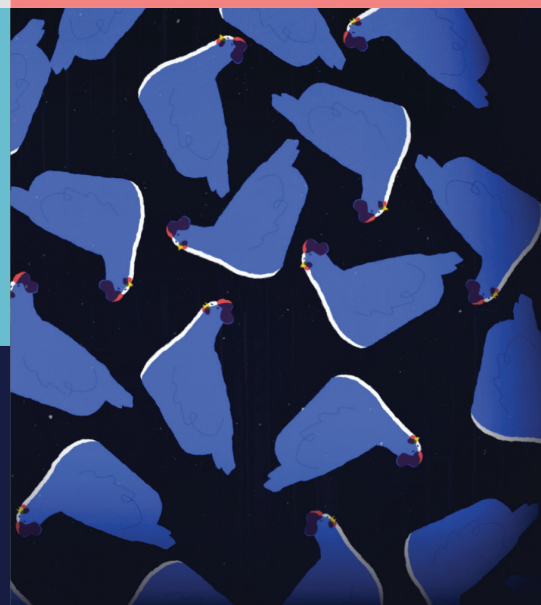
In response to consumer concerns about welfare issues, some producers have turned to **free range farming systems** where there are generally lower stocking densities and chickens have access to an outdoor range.

Although there are still welfare issues in these systems, chickens are able to go outside and experience sunlight, and have greater space to move freely, socialise and engage in natural behaviour.

STOCKING DENSITY

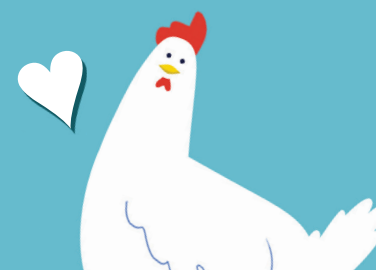
Broiler chickens in intensive systems are housed in long, generally windowless sheds. An average **150m x 15m** shed houses approximately **40,000 chickens**. These sheds are only slightly larger than **5 basketball courts**.

In these conditions, it is difficult for the chickens to move freely, socialise and engage in natural behaviour. Stocking densities are generally lower, though still relatively high, in free range systems.



COMPASSION AND RESPECT

Like all sentient animals, chickens deserve to be treated with respect and compassion and live free from suffering.



LEARN MORE & SPREAD THE WORD

To learn more about these welfare issues & to educate others:

- 1 Share this infographic with your friends;
- 2 Learn more about chicken meat production and chicken welfare on the Voiceless website (link below);
- 3 Do your own independent research into these issues.

Sources are cited in the Fact Sheet available at: **WWW.VOICELESS.ORG.AU/EDUCATION**