

BARASTOC

CARE HAS A COLOUR.

#First Edition.

CHOOKS HEALTH

**An introduction
to everything your
girls need to stay
healthy, happy,
and laying strong.**

*Great health
starts with
Barastoc yellow.*



**YELLOW MEANS STRONG SHELLS,
SHINING FEATHERS, AND HAPPY HENS.**

we put the chicken before the egg

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*10 tips to a
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PLUS
*Dorothy's
daily digest.*

AN INTRODUCTION TO OUR FEATHERED FRIENDS

We're

First the yolk (or 'oocyte') is produced in the ovary and then released into the oviduct. This is the point at which fertilisation will happen, with any luck, if the hen has mated with a rooster. If not, the egg will remain unfertilised. As the egg continues down the oviduct the albumen (egg white) is laid down, followed by the egg shell. The egg shell is initially flexible (much to the relief of your chickens), but it quickly hardens once the egg has been laid.

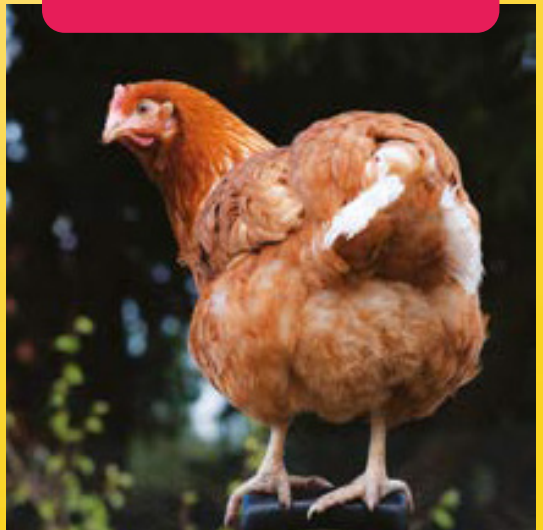
Did you know?

As the yolk travels through the oviduct, it is continually rotating, which twists structural fibres into rope-like strands that anchor the yolk in the thick egg white. This is why the yolk is always at the centre when you crack an egg open.

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IT TAKES ABOUT
24 HOURS FOR
A HEN TO MAKE
AND LAY AN EGG.

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Breed type and the weight of the chicken are other factors which can affect egg size. Generally speaking, the older the chicken, the larger the egg.

re into shape"

EGG SHAPE

The familiar pinched oval shape of the egg is no accident. It offers a lot of important advantages to the chicken and any potential chicks growing inside. First, the arched 'dome' is one of the strongest architectural forms, because it distributes weight and pressure equally across the entire structure. Try squeezing an egg from the ends and you'll see what we mean. The pointed oval is also the easiest shape for the hen to lay, which is no small thing when she's laying up to 300 of them a year!

EGG SIZE

In Australia, egg sizes are graded on the basis of their weight¹ as follows:

Size category	Weight (grams)
Medium	41.7 – 49.9
Large	50.0g – 58.2g
Extra large	58.3g – 66.6g
Jumbo	66.7 – 71.6g
Extra jumbo	71.7+

Did you know?

Eggs play a large part in creating the texture of cakes and other baked goods, which is why the size of the egg as well as the number of eggs to use are listed in recipes.

ESTABLISHING YOUR OWN HOME FLOCK



Your first step should be to make enquiries with your local council to find out what you can and cannot do. Many local councils have regulations on the keeping of poultry.

Typically, council regulations will include a restriction on the number of birds that are allowed on any given property. Many will also prohibit keeping roosters in metropolitan areas – yes, they do crow at dawn, and yes, your neighbours will mind.





CHOOSING THE RIGHT BIRDS FOR YOUR FLOCK

There are three main considerations – the breed of bird, the number of birds and their age.

BREED

What sort of birds do you want? The breed of bird should be determined by your main reasons for wanting chickens in the first place. If you like the idea of a lifetime supply of eggs, then commercial hybrids with high egg-laying potential such as the ISA Brown or Hy-line Brown are for you.

If you're all about looks or just after a loyal chook companion, then your options are limited only by your imagination. Recommended breeds that are available in Australia are Plymouth Rock, Barnevelder, Silkie, Polish, Frizzle, and Sebright.

NUMBER

How many should you get? Chickens are social animals, so you'll need at least two birds for their psychological wellbeing. Council regulations may cap the number of birds you are allowed, so make sure to check these first. Otherwise the only limit is the

size of your property. As a general rule, a large urban backyard with a lawn and garden can comfortably accommodate 3–4 birds. Rural lifestyle blocks can accommodate much larger flocks.

AGE

While chicks are adorable, rearing chickens from day-old requires husbandry skill, time and proper equipment. For this reason, we recommend that you establish your flock first with 'point-of-lay' pullets (16–18 weeks). If you want chicks, it might be better to wait until they're hatched by their mother, who will then do all the work to keep them happy and healthy. Important: Regardless of the breed, number or age, all birds should be purchased from a reputable source: Either a commercial hatchery or a recognised breeder. Often the classified section of rural newspapers will have advertisements for poultry detailing available breeds and prices.

KEEPING YOUR HOME FLOCK HEALTHY

Water is life

WATER AVAILABILITY

Like all living things, chickens need to stay hydrated to thrive. Easy access to fresh, clean and cool water at all times is critical, especially over the hot summer months. Pay particular attention to water temperature in summer and try to avoid black plastic containers, as they will heat up very quickly in the sun.



Use the following table as a guide to how much your chooks are likely to drink. Bear in mind that actual consumption will depend on the size of bird, level of egg production, the season and the type of drinker you're using.

WATER CONSUMPTION GUIDE

Age	Weekly Water intake per bird
1 week	200ml
5 weeks	750ml
10 weeks	1000ml
15 weeks	1100ml
20 weeks onward	1500ml



Did you know?

In extremely hot weather a good rule to follow is to provide at least three times the usual water allowance.

WATER QUALITY

Water quality is commonly overlooked as an important factor in caring for backyard chickens. Your chooks' favourite drop should be fresh and free from chemical contaminants, water-borne parasites and infectious agents. Water with a high salt content is also not good for chickens, and can cause poor shell quality and wet litter.

If you're using surface water (dam, river or irrigation) or any water from a source that has potentially been contaminated by waterfowl and other wild birds, it must be sanitised first. Your produce store or pet-food store should have everything you need to do this.

As a rule of thumb, try to give your flock water that you'd be happy to give a person! Potable and treated tap water is absolutely fine. It's also a good idea to keep drinking water off the ground so it stays clean and free of droppings.



Be the best version of you.



At Ridley we are passionate about providing tailored animal nutrition solutions to a diverse range of customers, from commercial farms through to backyard enthusiasts, to feed all types of animals including poultry, dairy cows, beef cattle, pigs, sheep, fish, prawns, horses, dogs and lifestyle animals.

Every product we sell is backed by our investment in a dedicated team of world class nutritionists, modern manufacturing facilities with strict quality standards, and research and development that keeps us at the forefront of advances in animal nutrition and science. Ridley; proudly working side-by-side with Australians who feed animals for a living or count them as part of their family.

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