



# HOUSING FOR INDIGENOUS CHICKEN





# HOUSING FOR INDIGENOUS CHICKEN

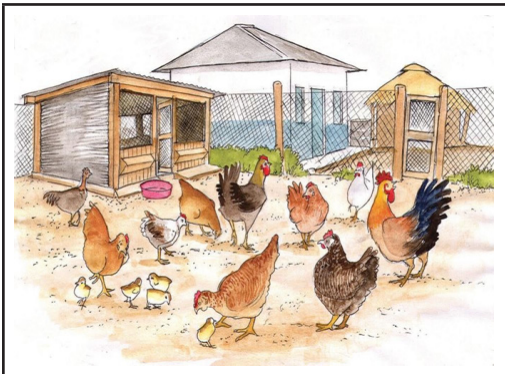


## Introduction

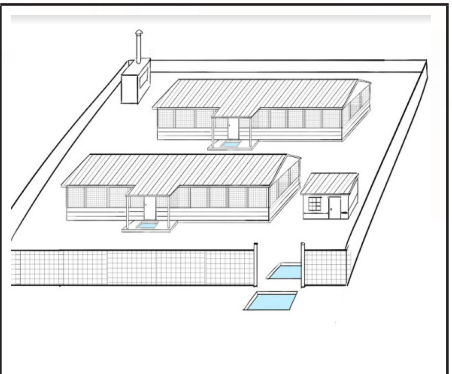
Housing protects chicken against predators, thieves, and adverse weather such as rain, sun, cold winds, and low night temperatures. Chicken house provides shelter for egg-laying and broody hens. Suitable chicken houses are important for efficient production and management. Chicken houses and shelters vary depending on the availability of materials, weather and traditions. The type of housing should be based on cost, durability and usage.

## Site selection for chicken Houses

The site should be dry and flat or the house can be elevated from the ground. Trees and bushes close to the site will provide shade, and windbreaks. The site should be secured against predators and thieves. In a rectangular house, blind end walls should face East and West prevent chicken from the hot afternoon sun and wind. Clear all grass and bushes for about 3 meters on all sides of the house to keep away snakes and rats.



*A chicken farm separated from the family house*



*Chicken farm layout*

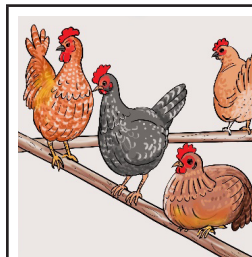
## Building a chicken house

- Use affordable and locally available materials like timber, off-cuts, reeds, sisal poles and thatch grass or clay bricks
- Remove the bark from the wood to reduce incidences of such as soft ticks.
- Chicken houses should have openings on the long sides for adequate ventilation.
- The chicken house should be separated from the family house to reduce incidences of disease and parasite entry.

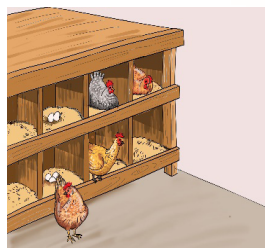
In addition, a hole or ridge on the roof will ensure proper ventilation. Avoid draughts (cold) inside the chicken house. High temperatures and humidity may cause deaths, a drop in egg production, low shell quality and reduced weight gain. To protect against the build-up of disease-causing agents and parasites the house must be accessible, and easy to clean with a foot bath at the entrance. Use slatted or raised floors to keep away droppings and avoid predators. Remove any sharp-edged objects from the house to prevent possible injury to the birds and humans.

### Space requirements by the different chicken ages

Age (weeks)	Bird per m <sup>2</sup>
1-4	20
5-10	10
11-18	8
19-78	5



PERCHES



LAYING NESTS



BROODING NEST

### Perches

They are important for chicken to roost on which reduces pecking and fighting. Five mature chicken require 1 metre of perch. Perches are best made from rounded sticks which match the size of the chicken's feet. Perches should be treated with used engine oil or kerosene to keep away parasites.

### Nests

Laying nests ease egg collection and help avoid dirty and cracked eggs. Avoid building nests on the ground or outside chicken houses as this will expose the eggs to predators and thieves. Removing eggs frequently from the nests is important to stop hens from going broody.

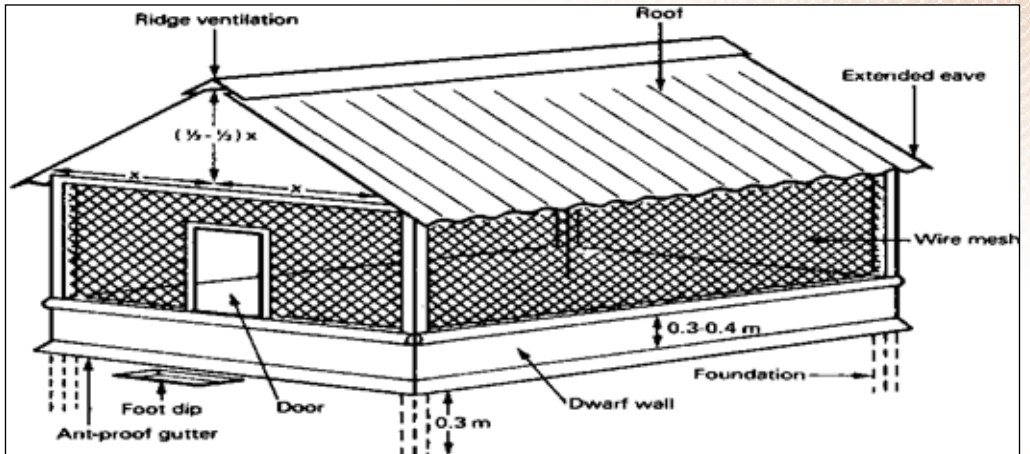
Brooding nests should be placed in a quiet and dark place. Nests can be made out of clay, calabashes, cardboard, wooden boxes or baskets made of local fibres. Individual nests should measure 45 x 45 cm (diameter x height).

Use ashes, tobacco leaves or other pesticides to keep off parasites



*A house made with locally available material*

## Plan and measurements of a raised floor chicken house







### **Contacts:**

Institute Director,  
Non-Ruminant Research Institute  
P.O. Box 169-500100, Kakamega  
Telephone 020 2619792  
Email: [director.nri@kalro.org](mailto:director.nri@kalro.org),

**Compilers:** Ouko V.O., Alaru P.A.O., Kariuki I.W., K'ooloo T.O.,  
Adongo A.O. and Ngaira V.M.

**Editors:** Nyabundi K.W., Mukundi K.T., Omondi, S.P., Maina P.,  
Wanyama H.N.,

**KALRO/NAVCDP IC Brochure No.055/2024**