

Introduction to Poultry (Kienyeji Chicken)

Introduction to Poultry (Kienyeji Chicken) Production

Designed as a quick-reference guide for students, extension agents, and small-scale farmers.

1. What Is a Kienyeji Chicken?

Feature	Description
Origin	Indigenous (local) chicken of East Africa, especially Kenya.
Genetics	Unselected, non-commercial genotype; hardy and well-adapted to local climate.
Physical traits	Small to medium body size (1–1.5 kg mature weight), feather colors vary (black, white, brown, speckled).
Behavior	Good foraging ability, strong broodiness, high disease resistance.
Production profile	Low egg production (50–80 eggs/year), slow growth (12–16 weeks to market weight).

2. Why Choose Kienyeji Production?

Advantage	Practical Implication
Adaptability	Survives on free-range grazing, minimal shelter.
Low input costs	No need for high-tech housing, expensive feed, or veterinary drugs.
Market niche	Premium price for “organic”, “free-range”, or “heritage” meat and eggs.
Resilience	Tolerates heat, humidity, and common parasites better than exotic breeds.
Cultural acceptance	Familiar to consumers; often used in traditional dishes.

3. Production System Options

System	Description	Key Management Points
Free-range / Scavenging	Birds roam on pasture, farmyard, or communal grazing land.	Rotate grazing areas; provide clean water and supplemental feed during dry seasons.

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Production		
Semi-intensive	Birds kept in simple shelters (e.g., thatched coop) with access to a fenced yard.	Provide nighttime protection from predators; provide starter/grower feed to boost growth.
Intensive (small scale)	Birds confined in a well-ventilated house; all feed and water supplied.	Requires proper housing design, regular cleaning, and a balanced feed formulation.

4. Site Selection & Housing

Consideration	Recommended Practice
Location	At least 30m from human dwellings and other livestock to reduce disease spread.
Ventilation	Open eaves, windows, or mesh walls; avoid drafts directly on birds.
Floor	Raised platform (30cm) with litter (dry straw, sand, or sawdust) for droppings.
Predator protection	Strong wire mesh (1mm) on all openings; lockable doors.
Lighting	Natural daylight is sufficient; if artificial light is used, 14h/10h light/dark cycle for egg production.
Space allowance	0.2m ² per bird for mature layers; 0.1m ² per bird for growers.

5. Breeding & Stock Management

Stage	Age (days)	Feed type	Typical management
Brooding	0–21	Starter (22% protein)	Provide heat (30°C day 1, reduce 2°C per week), clean water, starter feed ad libitum.
Grower	22–56	Grower (18–20% protein)	Gradual transition