

## Breed Selection of Chickens

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There are various reasons people raise chickens for eggs, meat, and exhibition or simply just for the caring and watching chicks grow. For some raising chickens is a hobby; and others see it as a sustainable part of living.

So, what are your needs? What is your end goal for raising chickens? These questions will help you to determine what category of poultry you are leaning towards.

Is your goal:

**Egg Production-** These chickens will lay eggs; however, what color egg would you prefer white, light brown, dark brown or colored?

**Egg and Meat Production-** These chickens are referred to as dual purpose breeds that tend lay an adequate amount of eggs and get large enough for meat production. American chicken breeds were developed for this purpose.

**Meat Production-** Chickens that are bred solely for meat production. Chickens reach 4-5 pounds in 6 weeks and 6-10 pounds in 8-12 weeks. The best growth rate will come from a Cornish crossed with a White Rock called a Cornish Cross.

**Exhibition of Poultry-** Showing chickens have becoming popular in the Midwest. The American Poultry Association (APA) has a publication called, The American Standard of Perfection. This book gives you a complete description of all the breeds and varieties of domestic chickens.

Selecting the best breed of chicken can be difficult as there are many to choose from. Understanding their differences will help you to increase your production, reduce your time and save you money. Within in article you will find a chart highlighting a few aspects producers look for in their flocks. This chart is designed to help you come to a decision about which breed is best for your needs.

Breed	Varieties	Egg Color	Egg Size	Characteristics	Meat
Ameraucana	Black, Blue, Blue Wheaten, Brown Red, Buff, Silver, Wheaten, White	Blue/Green	Large	Medium sized chicken, colorful feather patterns. Excellent egg layers	No
Anconas	Single Comb and Rose Comb	White	Extra Large	Known for being excellent large egg layers, non-setting and	No
Australorps	Black	Brown	Large	Popular breed for light brown eggs, heavy bird used for meat as well.	Yes

Brahmas	Light, Dark, Buff	Brown	Large	Heavy breed will brood and gentle natured.	No
Buckeye	Only one variety	Brown	Medium	Originated in Ohio. Heavier and wide breed making them an excellent dual purpose breed.	Yes
Buttercups	Gold, Silver	White	Medium	Mainly used for egg production.	No
Campines	Silver, Golden	White	Medium	Smaller breed better as an egg layer.	No
Cochins	Buff, Partridge. White, Black, Barred, Silver Laced, Golden Laced, Blue, Brown	Brown	Small	Fluffy feather, broody breed, and considered one of the largest breeds.	No
Cornish	Dark, White, White Laced, Blue, Brown			Excellent meat chickens	Yes
Delawares	Only one variety	Brown	Extra Large	Founded in the state of Delaware. Heavier breed that can be used as meat. Mostly white with barred on the tail and hackle.	Yes
Dominiques	Only one variety	Brown	Large	An American white and black barred breed (also known as cuckoo pattern). Adapt well to climates.	No
Dorkings-Single Comb	Silver Gray, Colored, Cuckoo, Red, White	White	Medium	Versatile breed used for meat and egg production. Has red ear lobes, but produces white eggs.	Yes
Faverolles	Salmon, White	Light Brown	Medium	Dual Purpose breed, mainly used for exhibition and has 5 toes.	Yes
Hamburg	Black, Golden Penciled, Golden Spangles, Silver Penciled, Silver Spangled, White	White	Medium	Known for being excellent large egg layers and good foragers.	No
Jersey Giants	Black, Blue, White	Brown	Large	Large, heavy breed used for egg production and meat.	Yes

Leghorn	Light Brown, Dark brown, White, Buff, Black, Silver, Red, Black Tailed Red, Columbian	White	Extra Large	Prolific egg layer	No
Maran	Black Copper, Wheaten	Dark Brown	Extra Large	Known for their very dark brown eggs. Excellent egg layers and may be used for meat.	Yes
New Hampshire Red	Red	Brown	Extra Large	Originated in New Hampshire. Dual purposes breed used more for meat production.	Yes
Orpington	Black, Blue, Buff, White	Brown	Large	Heavy dual purpose breed and an excellent egg layer. Good winter layer.	Yes
Plymouth Rock	Barred, White, Buff, Partridge, Silver Penciled, Blue, Columbian	Brown	Large	Dual purpose broody chickens that will make good mothers, and do not mind the cold.	Yes
Polish-Bearded and Non-Bearded	Golden Silver, White, Buff Laced, White Crested Blue, Black, Crested White	White	Medium	Prolific egg layers, similar to Leghorns.	No
RedCaps	Only one variety	White	Medium	This breed is a good egg layer, meat chicken and exhibition breed.	Yes
Rhode Island Reds	Single Comb and Rose Comb	Brown	Extra Large	Known for being the best egg layer as a dual purpose breed.	Yes
Sussex	Speckled, Red, Light, Brown, Silver, Buff	Brown	Large	Dual purposes breed.	Yes
Welsummers	Only one variety	Very Dark Brown	Large	Good egg production chicken, cold weather hardy with a docile temperament.	NO
Wyandottes	Silver Laced, Golden Laced, White, Black, Buff, Partridge, Silver Penciled, Columbian, Blue	Brown	Large	Dual purposes breed. Cold weather hardy and also make a good exhibition bird.	Yes

Resources:

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