



National Agricultural Research Institute

Australorp Chickens



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IDEAL VILLAGE CHICKENS FOR FAMILY

Australorp chickens are considered to be dual-purpose birds because they are used to produce both meat and eggs. This breed was developed in Australia from the Black Orpington. They are heavy birds with plumage colour greenish black and glossy. Roosters weigh 4.0 kg and hens 3.0 kg. They adapt and perform well in a range of conditions and are suitable for rural villages. They are more productive than the local village chickens but need care and attention to produce well.

MANAGEMENT

Australorp chickens are easy and cheap to look after as household animals. Birds can be raised in a simple deep litter house. The house should allow for enough light and ventilation and can be easily built using bush materials. For the first six weeks, the chicks must be kept indoors at all times and fed commercial feed such as pullet starter or cooked garden food and greens. After this period they can be allowed outside all day to scavenge for food but given extra food each evening.

Birds should be fed at the same time and place every day. Fencing or enclosing the chicken house for security reasons (ie to keep out dogs and thieves) is advisable. However, birds must be allowed scavenging to provide much of their own food every day. The chicks must have fresh clean water every day and have their feeders and drinkers regularly washed and kept clean.

BREEDING

Australorp chickens are ready for breeding at the age of about 7 months. A breeding ratio of 1 rooster to 10 hens is recommended. Australorp hens are able to produce between 120-180 eggs per year. However, these birds are not good mothers as they do not sit on the eggs to hatch them. Village chickens or Muscovy ducks can be used to sit on the Australorp eggs. Hatching will take about 21 days. The new chicks should be removed and reared separately. Australorp chickens may be eaten or sold at about 12 weeks of age.