

# Poultry Farming in Kenya: Breeds, How to Start

Chicken is a vital poultry type kept in Kenya. Other types of poultry are ducks, turkeys, geese, guinea fowl, and quail. Chicken is kept for egg and meat production. Chicken kept for egg production is called layers, while chicken kept for meat production is known as a broiler. In Kenya, poultry farming is key to economic growth and food security. The poultry farming business is a widespread profession in Kenya. However, it is mainly used on a small scale and mainly for domestic use. Let's check out more information about Poultry farming in Kenya.

## Types of chicken in Kenya

Layer, broiler, and dual-purpose are three types of chicken in Kenya. Also, it is essential to understand that the challenges facing farmers are different from one kind of chicken. An estimated poultry population in Kenya has 32 million birds, with the most significant proportion of indigenous chickens being 75%, layers and broilers being 24% and other types of poultry being 2%.

Thus, the industry is an essential source of food, income, employment and has many social and cultural uses besides having links with other sectors of the economy. Kenyan farmers are involved in either small-scale or large-scale poultry farming. Whether a farmer goes on a small scale or a large scale depends on the level of investment he can make and the knowledge of poultry farming. More than 67% of Kenya's population lives in rural areas, not to mention that agriculture is the primary source of livelihood there.

Therefore, it makes the land rare, especially with the growing population of Kenya. Poultry farming plays a significant role in Kenya's economy and food demand. The most considerable advantage of commercial poultry farming in Kenya is that it reduces the incidence of diseases in poultry. As a result, we do not have to import poultry products abroad. In addition to reaping the benefits of commercial poultry farming in Kenya, we must ensure that the required demand for food is available. You need to consider the following points for poultry farming;

- Land acquisition
- Baby chickens
- Unit construction
- Vaccination
- Feeding
- Purchase of poultry equipment

## **Reasons for keeping small-scale poultry farming easy in Kenya**

- It easily adapts to the daily lives of many small farmers, without much investment or involvement.
- It's affordable to start a business and maintain.
- Small-scale poultry management does not require complex accounting, stock-keeping, and procurement.

## **Unique features of large-scale poultry farming in Kenya**

- Make it suitable for facilitating commercial tendering of commercial eggs and meat products.
- The investment for large-scale poultry farming should be huge.
- An organized management system is needed to monitor production, procurement, accounting, sales, and marketing.

## **Scale of poultry farming in Kenya**

- **Small scale poultry farm** – It is one where about 1 to 1000 birds are raised
- **Medium-scale poultry farm** - About 1001 to 10,000 birds are reared
- **Large-scale poultry farming** - More than 10,000 birds are raised

Most poultry farmers in Kenya farm on a small scale.

## **Key types of poultry farming in Kenya**

### **Organic poultry farming**

This poultry farming is rearing poultry birds without necessarily keeping the birds in a cage for the good part of the day. Features of organic poultry farming in Kenya include;

- Shelter for birds at night.
- Birds move freely during the day in search of food and water.
- Benefits nature by simplifying the food chain process as poultry feeds insects and other pests.
- Affordable to start and maintain.

### **Inorganic poultry farming**

It is a form of farming that cages the birds. Features of inorganic poultry farming in Kenya include;

- Birds are adapted to the conditions and environment for rapid growth.
- It is mainly suitable for commercial poultry ventures in Kenya.
- The structure used for this project should take care of the technical regulations.
- A well-organized management system is needed.

Organic and inorganic poultry farming can be used for commercial purposes. Targets that encourage farmers to choose poultry farming include consumer preferences for poultry. As organic or inorganic poultry farming plays a role in fulfilling the economic purpose of the farmer.

### **Poultry farming practiced in areas in Kenya**

This is carried out near urban centers where a large ready market of poultry products is available. In rural areas, many families raise chickens using a culturally free-range system where chickens are allowed to walk freely in search of food. Other types of poultry that are mainly kept and sold in tourist hotels include turkeys, geese, ducks, guinea fowl, and quail.

### **Different types of chicken breeds in Kenya**

Frizzled Feathers, Naked-Neck, Dwarf, and the Normal-type are commonly found in warm regions. Naked-Neck genes are found in almost every village and are thought to be a natural adaptation to heat stress. Frizzled feathers may look sick at first glance, but they are also common in most village-based systems. Frizzled feathers usually cost more than feathered poultry in some parts of the country.

### **Improved breeds of chicken in Kenya**

These are the best breeds of kienyeji chicken available in Kenya and abroad. Commercial farmers prefer them because of their increased productivity compared to local and older dual-purpose chickens. It is cheaper to carry than hybrid layers and broilers as they can fight many diseases. Consumers prefer their nutritious and organic meats and brown eggs. Breeds in this category are;

- KARI Improved Kienyeji
- Kuroilers
- Rainbow Rooster
- Kenbro
- Sasso

### **Types of broilers in Kenya**

The hybrid broilers are raised for meat only. They grow very large and mature for slaughter in 35-49 days. Adult broilers weigh about 1.75 kg. They can be either males or females. The best types of broilers in Kenya are;

- Kenchic broilers
- Arbo Acres
- Hybro
- Cobb
- Hypeco

## **Types of layers of chicken in Kenya**

The best chicken breeds for eggs in Kenya are the best lay eggs between the 18-80 weeks of your life. You will earn more money by selling 2 kg ex-layered hens for slaughter. They have a good conversion ratio of 6 eggs per kg of used layer mesh. The best types of layers in Kenya are;

- Kenchic Layers
- shaver star cross
- Isa Brown
- Ross breeds

## **Duck types in Kenya**

Ducks are also bred for egg production or both, and there are more than 105 species of ducks worldwide. In Kenya alone, you will find 105 species of ducks. The critical point to keep in mind is that male ducks are called drakes while female ducks are called hens.

- Ruddy Shelduck
- Spur-winged Goose
- Knob-Billed Duck
- White-backed duck
- Egyptian Duck
- White-faced duck
- Fulvous Whistling-Duck

## **Turkey farming in Kenya**

It is usually done on a small scale, and very few farmers raise turkeys for profit. However, unlike chicken, turkeys bring in more cash. Varieties of turkey grown in Kenya are;

- Beltsville Small white
- Black Turkey
- Blue Slate
- Bourbon Red
- Broad-breasted whites

## **How to succeed in poultry farming in a few steps**

Farmers need to focus on specific areas. The key to success in poultry farming can be found in the following easy steps for beginners to follow poultry farming.

- Initially, make a business plan on how to run a business to avoid financial ruin.
- Identify the best place and know the poultry product's demand in the market.
- Consider an honest breeder to avoid buying the wrong breed.
- Buy standard poultry feed from a reputable supplier.

- Maintain proper hygiene. Get vaccinated on time to maintain the health of poultry.
- Remove toxic chemicals from or around the poultry home.
- Apply effective marketing strategies
- Adequate housing free from flood, pests, predators, and extreme cold or heat.
- Avoid crowds of birds.

## **Housing management**

Climate conditions in Kenya vary from place to place. For example, in Rift Valley, temperature levels are between 16°C (around Lake Nakuro Basin) and 29°C in the north. In Nyanza, the temperature is hot, from 15 to 26°C. In northeastern Kenya, temperatures range between 20°C and 40°C. So, poultry farmers in northeastern Kenya will need better ventilation systems in their poultry houses compared to farmers in Nyanza.

The principle of thumb when designing a poultry house is to dissipate heat and promote cooling by increasing the velocity of airflow, especially in hot regions of Kenya, such as the Northeast Province. Due to the hot temperatures in Kenya, the roof of a poultry house should be part of your ventilation system. A good roof is made of common building materials available in Kenya, especially iron sheets. When broilers are still chickens, they should be kept in a brooder, usually a warm shelter for chickens. Broilers require a temperature of 15 to 23°C to thrive.

## **Factors affected in cost of poultry house**

The cost of poultry houses in Kenya will depend on many factors. For example, if you don't have enough ground level to raise many chickens, you will need a storied shelter. So, the price will be higher. But, at the same time, it depends on the type of chicken you are raising.

## **Feed requirement**

Broilers usually lay their feathers in 5 weeks; it is essential to feed the baby chickens feeds that contain enough protein to facilitate the process of feathers. Make sure the feeders (containers containing chicken feed) are always full when the baby chickens begin to learn to feed.

Once the baby chickens have learned to feed correctly, reduce the feed amount on the feeder to reduce waste. But the same feed containers never be dry. Therefore, for the first weeks of broiler rearing, the protein content in the starter feed should be at least 23%. Broiler feeds five weeks and above, known as farmer's diet, should contain at least 19% protein.

## **Poultry farming methods in Kenya**

1. **Free-range system** - This is the traditional way of raising chickens. In this system, the farmer allows the chickens to roam freely on the farm for food and water. Poultry is kept for farmers' meat and eggs.
2. **Deep waste system** - This is a modern way of raising chickens and they are kept indoors all the time. The system structures are large and allow for free movement of the chickens. Food and water are also provided in this structure.
3. **Battery system** - This is a modern way of raising chickens. Each chicken is kept in its cage, food and water are kept in front of each cage.
4. **Use of folds** - The chicken is kept in a structure called a fold. Feeding and water troughs are located outside each layer. Birds feed on wire mesh.

## **Problems of poultry farming**

Outbreaks of diseases like chicken flu kill a large number of poultry birds. Then, this causes a lot of loss to the farmers. Moreover, the means of transportation are not well developed in poultry farming areas. Then, this makes it difficult for farmers to get reasonable prices for their produce. Moreover, poultry feed and medicines are expensive, and many farmers cannot afford them.

## **Cost of starting a poultry farm in Kenya**

You need to know how much it will cost you to start a poultry business before starting it. The initial cost can vary from place to place and even to different types of birds. The first important thing to consider is how big the poultry farm will be. Do you want to start a small or medium-scale poultry farm? The scale of your poultry farm will give you an idea of how much it will cost you to create it. Below are the things to keep in mind when starting a poultry business;

- Land Acquisition
- Feed Cost
- Vaccination
- Cost of Poultry Equipment
- Construction Cost
- Labor Cost

Keeping in mind all the above considerations, you need approximately Ksh 3000 to Ksh 25000 will be required to start small to medium poultry farms. For large poultry farms, you need more than 25,000 Ksh to get started.