

HOW-TO GUIDE:

# Poultry Farming

A Community Project



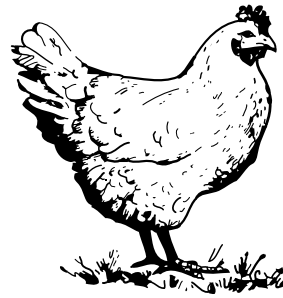
# Poultry Farming

## WHY POULTRY FARMING?

Poultry farming is a sustainable and inexpensive solution to increase protein in meals, which requires little space and only basic skills. Protein is a very important part of our daily dietary needs and poultry farming allows us to fulfill this need with fresh meat for a lower cost using a relatively simple method.

## ABOUT POULTRY FARMING

Poultry farming is the raising of domesticated birds such as chickens, ducks, turkeys and geese to farm meat or eggs for food.



## CAN YOUR COMMUNITY SUCCESSFULLY RUN A POULTRY FARM?

Before you commit to poultry farming, you must make sure you are able to provide good conditions and care to the poultry and that you know what this project means for your community.

*It is important that the community:*

- Is committed and willing to follow through with the project.
- Is aware of their needs as a community and how this project can meet those needs.
- Is aware of the amount of work, equipment and resources needed for profitability and productivity.
- Has an area of land at dimensions 30x30meters (assuming initial stocking of 50 chickens) where you can build a coop and have space for the chickens to roam around.
- Is able to provide the following materials — a thermometer, 50-60 bags of chicken feed, wood and netting (coop), 4-5 bags of sawdust, one drinker and two feeders (increase if necessary as chicks become big).

## DOES YOUR COMMUNITY HAVE THE ABILITY TO FOLLOW THE CHICKEN FARMING TIMELINE CORRECTLY AND COMPLETELY?

### Poultry Farm Stages

ACTIVITIES	MONTHS			
	1	2	3	4
1. Project Appraisal	.....→			
2. Coop Preparation		.....→		
3. Chick Development			.....→	
4. Chicken Development			.....→	
5. Harvesting			.....→	
6. Monitoring	←.....	.....	.....	.....→

*If your community meets these requirements then you are ready to begin the planning stage.*

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## PHASE I: COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Do you want to raise your own chickens? Do you have the interest and energy to plan and follow through with the project? To answer these sorts of questions, it is very important to meet as a community and discuss the way forward. Before making the final decision, the community should have a clear idea of what the farm means to the community and the possible positive and negative consequences of implementing the project. This is where people can share views of support or share concerns about the project.

*In addition to community member concerns and questions, try and answer the following questions:*

- Why do you want to implement this project?
- Who are you trying to help?
- Are community members able and willing to put in the time to maintain the chickens and their coop?  
For example, cleaning, refilling water etc.
- Where would you set up the coop?
- Is the project useful for the community's needs?
- What is your long-term plan? Will it be entirely subsistence, or will you sell a portion of your meat and keep the rest for your community or will you sell most of your meat?

After all questions and concerns have been addressed, decide whether or not the community will move forward with the project. If the community has decided the project is not appropriate at this time, consider thinking of other options to meet the community needs. If the community supports the project, choose a project leader or chairperson to guide the project. Choose the location, assign responsibilities to members (including nominating someone to purchase the materials), and decide on expectations of the community and results you want to achieve from the project.

### Community Cohesion

It is important that the majority of the community supports this initiative before it is implemented. A community working together and supporting each other will ensure a project's success and sustainability. Also when beginning new practices it is easier to work in a group to ensure there is support and fellowship in terms of sharing of ideas and best practices.

### Proposal Writing

Once you have decided on all the major details of the project, assigned responsibilities, shared expectations, and gained community commitment, you are ready to begin! Do this by putting all the planning into words. It is very important to plan and put things down in writing as this makes the project more official and makes it easy to follow through and be successful.

*In your proposal you need to include:*

- Why you are choosing this project and what it means to your community.
- Project goals.
- Timeline.
- Role and responsibilities.
- Where materials will come from.
- When or how often you will produce a progress report.
- Total cost.

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Think about how many chickens you want to sell and how many you want to keep. Also think about whether or not you want to raise chickens for eggs, and if so, how many will you sell and how many the community will keep. For example, do you want to give priority to the children and/or sell to the community?

## PHASE 2: CONTACT THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE FOR SUPPORT

### Ministry of Agriculture

The best step a community can take once it is ready to farm chickens is to contact the nearest Ministry of Agriculture Office. The Ministry of Agriculture has Extension Officers around Fiji. This is important as these Extension Officers provide support, training and guidance for the project. It is therefore very important for communities to link up with an Extension Officer prior to commencement of their project for technical advice.

It is the communities' responsibility to contact their area Extension Officers to support them on their project. Extension Officers are there to support the community and even individuals when needed.

AREA	CONTACT
Central Division	3384233
Western Division	6661000
Northern Division	8812318

## PHASE 3: BUILDING AND EQUIPPING YOUR COOP

### Making a coop

The Ministry of Agriculture provides support on building a coop for your chickens, however it is encouraged to try and come up with a coop design that is easy for your community to build depending on cost, access to materials and environment.

*Whichever way you choose to build your coop, make sure it has the following minimum requirements:*

- Enough space (around 60x60cm of area for each chicken). It is very important your chickens have space to sleep and eat to encourage complete and optimal growth.
- Perching areas.
- Insulation (in case of cold weather).
- Food and water and areas where they will be accessible to chickens at all times.
- Good ventilation.
- Fencing/cover for protection and to contain the chickens.

### Making a feeder

Making a feeder for your chickens is cheap and easy.

*All you need to do is:*

- Take a large bucket (e.g. a washing bucket or dustbin) and a planter base.
- Drill one inch holes around the base of the bucket.
- Use a bolt to attach the planter base to the bucket.
- Fill the bucket with feed and cover the top. The feed should come out of the holes at the bottom into the little channel created by the planter base.





## PHASE 4: TAKING CARE OF YOUR CHICKS

Although there are many aspects of chick care, here are just a few basic things you should keep in mind when handling chicks:

- Check on them three to five times a day for the first two or three weeks.
- Keep the chicks warm.
- Make sure water is always available.
- Litter can be made of straw or rice hulls.
- Feed the chicks with broiler starter.
- Make sure to clean your hands before and after handling the chicks.

## PHASE 5: TAKING CARE OF YOUR CHICKENS

### Feeding

As a chicken grows, their feed will need to be changed to provide them with different nutrients to support their growth.

*The timeline is as follows for possible feed options:*

- Pacific Feeds Starter Crumble: 1st day-6 weeks
- Pacific Feeds Farmer Grower Pellets: 6 weeks onwards

As the chicken becomes mature or when the feed finishes you can also supplement food pellets with kitchen scraps every so often, including oats, seeds, corn, scraped dried coconut, dried cassava, bele, tubua, dhal and water.

### Maintaining your coop

It is very important your chickens are brought up in a clean environment and are comfortable and happy.

As such you must keep it clean and fully-stocked with food and water at all times.

#### *Clean up your coop – poop board, sand, coop floor*

- Clean feeders and water containers every two weeks (not doing so risks the introduction of lice, mites and other parasites).
- Provide fresh, clean water at all times.
- Lightly spray water on the litter to keep it moist. Be careful not to spray too much as it can increase bacteria growth.

#### *Take precaution when you clean. A few suggested ways to do this are:*

- Wash your hands before and after handling your chickens.
- Keep a pair of coop shoes to wear only in the coop.
- Change clothes after cleaning the coop.
- Wear a face mask.
- Clean the eggs.

#### *Monitoring your chickens*

- Warning signs of ill health - check poop for worms.
- Number of chicks daily, number of chickens matured and ready to eat.



## PHASE 6: HARVESTING

Your chickens should be ready to harvest in around nine weeks. At this point, you can harvest one a week in order to allow others to mature. You can sell the meat for \$15.00-\$20.00 per chicken.

## PROBLEMS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

### Keeping your chickens cool

Sometimes the weather can be too warm for chickens and can be dangerous. To keep chickens cool you could build your coop so that the cover is removable and you can take it off during the day, or you can use coconut leaves as a coop cover.

### Keeping to a feeding schedule

Make sure you create a feeding schedule and roster so that there is always someone in charge of feeding the chickens.

### Community wanting to sell chickens

It is very important to always remember why it is the community started the project: for nutrition. Selling the chickens is fine if the community has some to spare and is still able to feed the families. If not, selling chickens makes it difficult to continue to project on the same system and to provide protein for families in the community.

## SUSTAINABILITY

### Fertilizer

Chicken manure is nitrogen-rich and acts as a very good fertilizer for farming or for a fish pond.

### Egg farming

Once you feel comfortable raising chickens for meat, you can think about expanding your farm to harvest eggs as well.

### Increasing scale

Another long-term possibility to increase the capacity of your poultry farm is to partner with a supplier. This will connect your farm directly to a market and more importantly will give you many capital benefits from the support that suppliers offer to their farm partners. Note: make sure you know the company's standards and protocols before selling your chickens to them.

### Linking with partners

As you increase your experience in poultry farming, you could think about expanding partnerships to improve the quality of your methods. Contact FRIEND for training, monitoring and sustainability.

### Expanding services

To provide employment and to add value to your poultry farm, your community, specifically the women, think about cooking and selling the chicken for around \$10.00 per kilo.

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## ADVANTAGES OF POULTRY FARMING

### Accessibility

Poultry farming provides a more dependable source of protein than other sources. Prawns are seasonal. The weather can affect fishing. Tuna is expensive and imported.

### Improved nutrition

Increased accessibility and affordability to protein allows community members to consume protein more often, therefore making meals more nutritious.

### Quick growth

Chickens mature quickly compared to other sources of protein, with a potential time span of only eight weeks before being ready for consumption.

### Ongoing supply

Poultry farms are not dependent on weather cycles making it a dependable, ongoing source of income and protein.

### Financial profit

Taking into account costs of birds and feeds from Pacific Feeds and assuming around 30 chickens, communities can make around \$200-\$400 per harvesting cycle.



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## Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.