



Chicken Terminology

TER·MI·NOL·O·GY

The body of terms used with a particular technical application in a subject of study.

DEVELOPMENT

TERM	DEFINITION
Chick	Newly hatched chicken
Cockerel	Male that is under a year old
Pullet	Female under a year old
Juvenile	A young male or female bird
Cock	Male that is a year or older
Hen	Female a year or older
Rooster	A male chicken (includes Cock and Cockerel)
Bantam	Refers to small breeds of chickens (AKA Miniature Chicken)
Layer Breed	Breed of chicken that is raised primarily for egg collection
Dual Purpose Breed	Breed of chicken that is raised for both eggs and meat
Ornamental Breed	Breed of chicken that is raised primarily for show or exhibition
Production Breed	Breed of chicken that is raised for high egg production or meat production

ENVIRONMENT

Nesting Box	A cubicle where a chicken can privately lay eggs
Bedding/Litter	A material used to cover the floor/ground in confined spaces
Hardware Cloth	A sturdy mesh product made of metal or plastic used generally on the coop to keep them contained
Chicken Wire	Light wire netting with a hexagonal mesh
Brooder	A type of heated enclosure for raising chicks
Roosting	A chicken or group of chickens resting, likely on an elevated perch
Chicken Tractor	A movable chicken coop lacking a floor allowing flock access to the earth beneath them
Coop	An enclosure where chickens are kept safe and secure
Run	A fenced or enclosed outdoor space for your chickens

HEALTH

Wry Neck	Typically seen in chicks causing them to twist their neck, stare upwards and have trouble standing likely caused by a Vitamin E or selenium deficiency
Amprolium	Medication used as an aid to prevent and treat coccidiosis and can be found in some medicated chick feeds
Mites	Bugs that live on the skin of chickens
Poultry Lice	Insects that live only on chickens and their feathers
Dust Bath	Bathing in dirt or other substances to help remove external parasites and groom plumage
Coccidiosis	Intestinal disease that occurs when a microscopic parasitic organism attaches itself to the intestinal lining
Avian Influenza	A naturally occurring virus that effects chickens and other species of poultry
Fowl Pox	Viral disease in chickens and other species of poultry that causes lesions on skin (cutaneous form) and can affect respiratory tract and upper GI (diphtheritic form)
Newcastle Disease	An extremely contagious disease affecting birds, including domestic poultry
Salmonella	Intestinal bacteria that is typically heard about when discussing food poisoning
Bumblefoot	A bacterial infection and inflammatory reaction on the feet of birds
Pasty Butt	Describes the condition that occurs when a chicks vent is covered in feces and becomes clogged

FEATHER TYPES

TERM	DEFINITION
Molting	Loss of feathers due to change in season followed by re-growth
Frizzle	A genetically programmed ornamental feather type causing the curling of feathers
Down	Fine layer of feathers that covers young birds and is found under the tough exterior feathers of older birds
Muff	Short feathers on the sides of a chicken's face and below the chin area
Saddle	Feathers in front of the tail
Sickle	The pair of long curving feathers on a cock's tail
Beard	The elongated feathers below the beak area that created a puffy look to some birds
Pin	A developing feather seen on maturing birds as well as after molt

FEED TYPES

Starter Grower Feed	A feed formulated for growing chicks up to laying age or 16 weeks for hens
Layer Feed	A feed formulated for hens at laying age to support healthy and strong egg production
All Flock Feed	A feed specifically formulated for mixed flocks of poultry
Gamebird Showbird Feed	A feed with higher protein for to promote growth in gamebirds, showbirds and meatbirds
Scratch	Blended and whole unfortified grains that commonly includes corn
Grit	Crushed rock that helps break down food in the gizzard

ANATOMY

Wattle	Flesh under the beak of a chicken that is used as a heat regulating mechanism
Crop	Part of the digestive system on chickens that stores food before continuing on to be fully digested
Cloaca	An all-in-one urinating, defecating and mating mechanism located on the hind end of the chicken
Spurs	A sharp appendage that can grow on the legs of chickens
Comb	A featherless crest at the top of a chickens head
Vent	An opening in chickens where waste and eggs are expelled
Crest	The feathers protruding from the top of a chickens head

REPRODUCTION

Broody	A chicken that has decided to sit on and hatch a clutch of eggs
Bloom	A thin coating that covers an egg and prevents bacteria from effecting the egg
Candle	Shining a light on the backside of an egg to examine its contents
Internal Pip	During the hatching process, when the chick breaches the membrane into the aircell of the egg, it is called the internal pip
External Pip	During the hatching process, the chick's first small crack or hole in the shell is called the external pip
Clutch	A group of 12 to 15 eggs gathered for hatching
Blastoderm	A small white bullseye on the egg yolk indicating a fertile egg
Blastodisc	A small white disc on the egg yolk indicating an infertile egg
Incubator	A machine that maintains the perfect temperatures to hatch an egg