

# Whatawhata CHICKEN guide

Welcome to the Whatawhata School chicken guide. This guide will teach you how to care and train your chick and show you the judging criteria. Our Ag Day will be on the 16<sup>th</sup> October so get working hard! In the meantime, enjoy your new pets

## CARING FOR YOUR CHICKEN

### Keeping your chick warm and safe

Your chicks cannot regulate their temperature which means if they get too hot or cold they will die. When you get your chickens you need to keep them warm. They can be kept in a hot water cupboard for the first couple of nights until other arrangements are made.



You need a house that lets the chicks stay warm and safe. Put shredded paper on the floor. Your house needs to be secure from cats and/or dogs. It needs to be out of the wind and not in direct sunlight. You will need a heat source like a fixed 60 watt light bulb and light fitting that will be left on all the time. As the chicks get older (about 3 weeks old) they will have grown enough feathers to be able to be outside during the day time if the weather is warm. This will allow you to turn off their light (warmth) during the day. You can usually tell if they are ready for this as they will move away from the light to cool off.

As the chickens grow, their house must be enlarged. You will need a box about 1 metre x 300mm x 500mm deep. Cover the box with chicken mesh. Have a solid lid at one end so you can put food and water in.

### Food and water

The most suitable food is chick starter which contain the correct vitamins, or fine chick grain. As they get older you can give them **small** bugs and worms. Make sure the chickens eat all their food in 15 minutes, four or five times a day, otherwise it means they are getting too much.



The first couple of times you feed your chicks you may have to wiggle your finger in the crumbles until they 'get the idea' of where and

what their food is. The chicks don't have a mother to show them. The chicks will grow really fast and you will need to feed them more and more as they grow.

Your chicks will need access to nice cold clean water at all times. A low container is good as chicks can't drown in their water if it is too deep. Put rocks at the bottom so they can't fall in. Make sure the water is always clean.

### **Getting to know your chick**

Your chicks will respond to the amount of time you spend with them and all develop individual personalities. It is best not to handle them too much for the first 2-3 days as they will be quite overwhelmed with all the changes and are quite fragile and easily hurt. You will need to watch little brothers and/or sisters and be on "squash" alert – remember how small these little chicks will be.

Chicks are quite curious so it is often good to give them something to look at in their house. You can put a low perch in for them to climb on – this also helps them learn to perch in preparation for when you move them outside. You can use a twig about as round as your little finger and nail it to two small blocks of wood so it is stable and won't tip over. If you find small bugs or worms you can bring the chicks treats. A lump of grass in a cut down ice cream container is also fun for the chicks to explore.

### **Things to do if your chicks don't look well**

Make sure they are warm inside and not in a draught or outside in the cold. Ensure they have food, fresh water and clean out their house every day. Make sure one chicken is not being bullied by the other if you have two.

### **Bringing your chicken to Agriculture Day**

You should choose your favourite chick to bring to Ag Day. It needs to be in a secure cage or box. A good idea is to bring an old towel to place on top of your chicken's cage to protect it from the hot sun and or wind. You will need to attach a label to the cage showing YOUR NAME, YOUR AGE and your CHICKEN'S NAME.

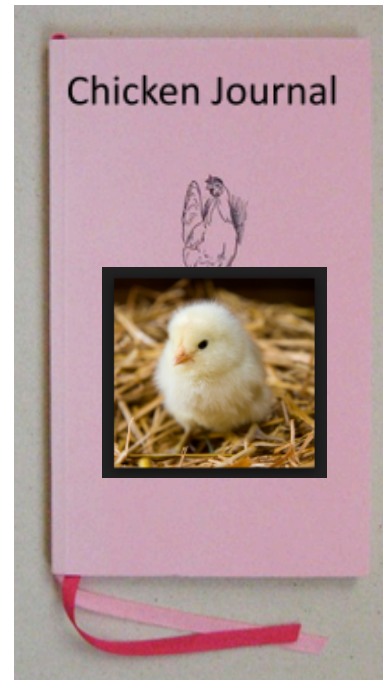
# Judging YOUR CHICKEN

Your chicks will be judged in three areas, the chicken journal, chicken knowledge and most obvious pet

## **1. Judging: Chicken Journal**

For the first part of the judging you will be making a chicken journal. You could include things like:

- Photos of the adventures you have with your pet chick.
- Pictures of you and your chick having fun.
- Images of the first time your chick learns something new.
- Take pictures to show its growth.
- Drawings of your chick.
- How you looked after it, when you fed it, how you cleaned it etc.
- Be creative with your journal – Show us how arty you are!



## **2. Chicken knowledge**

For this part of the competition you will need to know things about your chick. This may include its breed, its age, its birthday, how to care for your chick, what you feed it, what breed your chick is (if you can tell), what this breed is good for, when it hatched (the 30th August), when it grew its first adult feathers, if it is a hen or rooster (hint - they are all hens!) and any special abilities it may have. The more you know the better.

You will also be judged on their bond with you, how friendly they are to you, how healthy they look and how well you care for your chick.

## **3. Most obvious pet:**

No questions here, just judging on the relationship between chick and owner. We look at the bond, how comfortable chick and owner are with each other, how tame the chick is, any special things you've taught your chick and how clean and cared for it looks.