

Chicken Terminology

Whether you have chickens or not, you should know what you're talking about with this list of common poultry terms. This is considering age, sex and purpose of poultry birds.

Gallus domesticus/ Gallus gallus: The fancy (scientific) name for domestic chicken

Chicken: Any member of domestic chicken irrespective of sex at any age

Day old chick (DOC): Hatching day of chicks

Baby chick: Chick within one week of age

Chick: Chick within eight weeks of age

Growing chick/Grower: Chick within 9 to 16 weeks of age

Pullet: Female adult chicken of 5 to 6 month age, which not laid egg

Pullet hen: Newly laid female chicken over 6 month of age

Hen: An adult female chicken which has laid eggs

Layer: A hen of laying condition/ Commercial female chicken raised to lay eggs

Cockerel: A non caponized male chicken less than one year

Capon: Caponized male chicken usually less than 8 months of age for table use as meat is softer, fine texture and flavor

Caponization: Method of removing sex gland or inactivation the function of sex gland

Cock: A mature male chicken over one year with coarse skin, darkened meat, hardened breastbone tip and use for breeding purpose.

Broiler: A hybrid chicken raised for meat for 4 to 8 weeks of age. It has smooth skin, meat is very soft and fine texture, flexible breastbone cartilage. The FCR is below 2 :1 or less

Fryer: Another name for broiler, or chicken raised for meat

Rooster: An adult male chicken, older than fryer and weight more than 1.5kg

Hybrid: Commercial broiler/ layer having high meat/egg producing capability, they can not transfer traits uniformly to their offspring

Grand parent stock (GPS): Foundation stock used for breeding as male and female line to produce parent stock chicks

Parent stock (PS): Stock which are used for breeding to produce hybrid chicks

Cannibalism: Toe picking, feather picking, vent picking, head and tail picking within the birds. It occurs due to nutrient deficiency or other environmental stress.

Debeaking: Process of cutting beak to prevent cannibalism by debeaker machine

Roost: A resting or lodging place for chicken

Plumage color: External feather color of any poultry bird

Dubbing: Removal of single comb or wattle within 6 wks by the use of scissor with minimal bleeding

Ration: The feed allowed for an animal for 24 hrs

Brooder: A heated, enclosed place where baby chicks are kept during the first weeks of their life while they're growing their feathers (until then they can't keep themselves warm)

Broody hen: A hen that stops laying eggs when her 'maternal' instincts kick in. When this happens, she'll sit on a clutch of eggs, waiting for them to hatch.

Chicken run: A fenced in portion of yard attached to the chicken coop where chickens can freely roam

Dust bath: When a chicken covers themselves with dirt to help get rid of mites or to help cool themselves off on hot days

Clutch: A group of eggs that are laid together (often being sat on by a broody hen)?

Coop: A house where chickens live

Egg tooth: The sharp end of a chick's beak that's used to break out of the egg shell

Incubator: A heated device used for hatching eggs

Litter: The bedding material spread on the floor of a chicken house (i.e. wood shavings, straw)

Roost: A perch, pole or shelf generally 2 feet or more off the ground where chickens rest and sleep

Sexing: When baby chicks are separated by gender

Straight run chicks: When baby chicks have not been separated by gender

Molt: When a chicken sheds their feathers (usually happens once a year but can be stress related as well)

Pip/ Pipping: When the beak of the chick first cuts the shell, i.e., chick is starting to hatch

Cape: The grouping of long feathers (hackles) on a chicken's neck

Comb: The red flap of fleshy 'skin' sticking up on top of a chicken's head

Down: The soft, fluffy feathers on a baby chick

Primaries: The big, stiff feathers on the chicken's wings that aid in flying

Vent/cloaca: Opening or organ of genital, urinal and fecal discharge

Duck

Duck: Any member of *Anas platyrhynchos*, irrespective of sex at any age. Besides the term indicates adult female duck also

Duckling: Young offspring of duck

Drake: An adult male duck

Goose

Goose: A mature female goose

Gander: A mature male goose

Turkey

Poult: An immature turkey of any sex

Tom: A young male turkey

Young hen: A young female turkey

Pigeon

Many are interested in pigeons as a hobby, then they need to get to know some common pigeon terms. This is by no means a comprehensive list, but just a starter for someone who wants to get to know the hobby better. Here is a list:

Band - a band is a piece of plastic with information on it, that is added to the pigeon's leg when it is a baby. It is commonly added to the right leg. It has various information on it, such as the owner's phone number, a unique ID number, pigeon's month/year of birth, etc.

Bib - a colorful area on the front of a pigeon's neck

Cock - a male pigeon.

Coo - the general name for the sounds that pigeons make, usually during courtship.

Coop (also known as a "Loft") - the structure or 'house' that pigeons live in.

Crop - the 'stomach' located under the pigeon's neck. Food sits here for a while before passing through the rest of the digestive system. This is where the food is stored for feeding the babies.

Fancier - the name given for a person who devotes his entire time (spare or otherwise) raising pigeons.

Hen - female pigeon.

Squab - a baby pigeon.

Guinea fowl

Many people incorrectly refer to guinea fowl as guinea hens. Guinea hens are the female of the species and the term should not be used to refer to the species as a whole.

Poultry – Domestic fowl raised for meat or eggs

Guinea fowl – The proper name for the species

Guinea hen – the adult female guinea a year of age or older

Guinea cock – the adult male guinea a year of age or older

Keet – the offspring of a guinea hen and a guinea cock from hatch through 12 weeks of age.

Young guinea – any guinea aged 12-52 weeks of age

Pullet – a female guinea under a year of age

Cockerel – a male guinea under a year of age

Helmet – the protuberance on the top of the head of guinea fowl