

# Chickens and Hormones – The Facts



Australian Chicken Meat Federation (ACMF) Inc

**Did you know that Australian meat chickens are never fed any hormones or steroids? In fact, the use of hormones and steroids in poultry has been banned in Australia for almost half a century!**

It is true that chickens today are much bigger and grow faster than they did 50 years ago. But there are several good reasons for this. **How much do you really know?**

## Conventional Selective Breeding

- Most of the improvements in growth rates over the past 50 years are due to genetic gain achieved by traditional breeding methods (with no GM technology involved).
- This approach is particularly effective with chickens because of the substantial investment in advanced breeding programs by large well-resourced specialist breeding companies and because the number of generations that can be produced in a relatively short period of time. Chickens reach sexual maturity at about 20–25 weeks of age, then take only three weeks to start producing the next generation. Each hen can produce up to 150 progeny within a year of its own hatching.



Newly hatched chick



Meat chickens

*Chickens are bigger today because of conventional selective breeding, improved nutrition, health management and animal husbandry... not hormones or steroids.*

## Improved Nutrition

- Further improvements flow from improved nutrition.
- The precise profile of nutrients such as energy, protein, essential amino acids, vitamins and minerals that a chicken needs at each stage of its growth is being studied extensively.
- Professional poultry nutritionists formulate feed to match the chickens' precise nutritional requirements, thereby optimising growth.



Chickens are fed mainly wheat and sorghum

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Excellent sources of information on chicken meat, endorsed by the chicken meat industry, include [www.chicken.org.au](http://www.chicken.org.au) and the Chook Infoline 1300 4 CHOOKs (1300 424 665).

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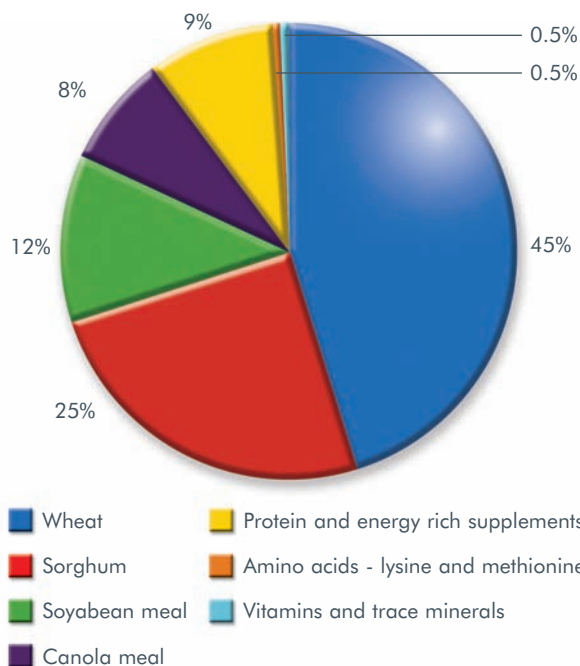
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**The claims "no added hormones", "produced in Australia", and "no cages" APPLY TO ALL CHICKEN MEAT SOLD IN AUSTRALIA regardless of the farming system.**

- All chickens are fed a mixture of one or more grains as the major part of their diet (approximately 70% grains). In Australia, the grain component is mainly wheat and sorghum, but may also include barley, oats, field peas and lupins. Soybean meal, canola meal and other oilseed meals are included as protein-supplement ingredients.
- Grains and protein meals are complemented with vitamins, trace minerals, essential amino acids and additional protein and energy rich ingredients to ensure all nutritional requirements are met at each stage of the chicken's development.

The Australian chicken meat industry fully supports and adheres to the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals developed by the Federal Government in consultation with State Governments, industry, animal welfare organisations and the general public. In many instances, the industry standard is substantially higher than the minimum stipulated in the Code.

## Typical Composition of Chicken Feed



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## Animal Husbandry and Health Management

- Other gains made are due to better husbandry techniques, which include better housing with improved temperature control, and health management.



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