

The truth about how meat chickens are farmed in Australia



Australian Chicken Meat Federation (ACMF) Inc

Did you know that Australian meat chickens are never kept in cages? They are raised in large carefully ventilated barns with comfortable bedding material covering the floor and have easy access to food and water. Both free range and organic chickens also have access to an outside run!

Two out of three Australians are confident that they understand the differences between conventional, free range and organic chicken, however they are often wrong. **Let's see what you know about the different farming systems for meat chickens.**

Conventional farming

- Chickens are raised in large enclosed barns.
- Feed and clean water is available throughout the shed 24 hours a day.
- Trained poultry nutritionists develop feeding plans to meet the birds' nutritional needs.
- The flow of fresh air and the temperature are controlled to provide best possible environmental conditions.

Free range

- Methods similar to conventional management are used.
- Chickens also have access to outside runs during the day.
- Target stocking densities are lower.
- Antibiotics may be used if necessary but the meat can then no longer be sold as free range.

Certified organic

- In addition to free range requirements, feed comes predominantly from certified organic ingredients.
- Birds cannot be treated with routine vaccination.
- Chickens are older at harvest.
- Producers must comply with The National Standard for Organic and Bio-Dynamic Produce.

Corn fed

- Chickens are fed a diet in which corn replaces a portion of the wheat and sorghum in the diet, giving the meat and skin a yellow colour.

Grain fed

- All meat chickens are "grain fed" in that all chickens in Australia are fed a diet which is made up predominantly of grains.

Chemical-free

- This label refers to the processing, *not the farming method*.
- No chlorinated water is used in the processing plant.
- Water is sanitised by exposure to UV light rather than chlorine.
- The meat is cooled by exposure to a cold air stream rather than an iced water bath.



Free range farm

Meat chickens are never kept in cages.

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

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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.



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.

All chicken meat is locally produced* which means Australian consumers can have confidence that the highest food safety, hygiene and animal welfare standards are followed, resulting in a high quality, healthy, nutritious and versatile protein.

* Except for some small amounts found in imported canned products (e.g. chicken soup) and some frozen cooked meat that comes from New Zealand.



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