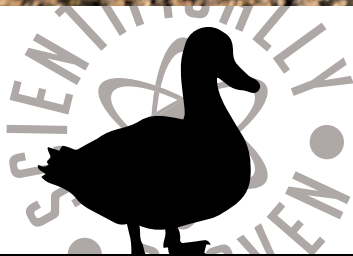




# DUCK

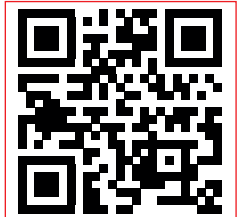


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# DUCK FEEDING

A combination of good nutrition and proper management is essential for raising healthy ducks. Maximum efficiency for growth and reproduction can be obtained through the right diet and feeding program.

## GROWING DUCKS

Growing ducks should be allowed free access to feed and water at all times. Proper feeder and drinker height, maintenance and sanitation are essential for achieving uniform flock growth and health. The feeder pan height should be in line with the back of the average duck. Drinker pan height should be even with the lower neck area of the average duck. Finally, water nipples should be adjusted at a slightly higher level than that of the water pans. Feeders and drinkers that are too low result in excessive wastage. Those that are too high restrict feed and water access to the smallest ducks and thus increase size variation in the flock. Drinkers and feeders must be kept as clean as possible at all times. Shelter feeders from the sun, wind and rain to minimise feed spoilage. Feed hoppers that are used outdoors should have lids that fit securely. If feed hoppers are placed within a building or pen, and water supplies are placed outside, the hoppers should be closed overnight to prevent the ducks from choking on dry feed.

To start ducklings, use shallow pans or small feeders and provide dim lighting throughout the night. Small feeders can be used until the ducks are two weeks old. Most feeding equipment available for poultry is suitable for ducks. Large type feed hoppers and hanging feeders will save labour and ensure an adequate supply of feed. Allow approximately 1.25 cm of feeder space per bird for the first two weeks, increasing this to approximately 2 cm for the next two weeks and 2.5 cm to 3.17 cm for the remainder of the growing period. Duck feeds are usually fed in the form of pellets or crumbles. The feeding of pellets has been shown to reduce feed wastage, improve feed efficiency and increase growth response. Young ducklings of 3 or 4 weeks of age can have access to pasture. Since ducks are not nearly as good foragers as geese, it can be quite economical to rear ducks without pasture. Nevertheless, the use of range or supplementary green food will save on feed costs.

Ducklings should have a continuous supply of clean, fresh water. For a water trough, allow 1.25 cm of water space per bird or two suitable automatic cup-type drinkers for each 100 ducks for the first two weeks. For the next two weeks, increase the space to 2.5 cm for troughs and four cup-type drinkers should be placed preferably on wire platforms over drains to help prevent wet litter. For range or outdoor yards, automatic drinkers may be used.

## FEEDING DEVELOPING BREEDERS

Feed quality, the amount of feed consumed, and the rate of body weight gain is extremely important in determining the rate and number of eggs produced by breeder ducks. Breeder ducklings raised on a restricted diet with specific target weights have superior egg production characteristics over breeder ducklings given feed continuously. A restricted or limited diet controls the nutrient intake to prevent the gain of excess body fat. Meat-type ducks, such as Pekins, which are kept as breeders, will become excessively fat if fed ad lib during their development prior to lay. It is therefore necessary to limit their daily intake of feed to an amount that will supply all the necessary nutrients that are needed for proper development, while avoiding an excess of calories. Excessive body fat in hens interferes with the function of the reproductive tract. The reproductive tract can be blocked or pinched off as abdominal fat increases. Studies on breeder Pekin ducklings has shown that overweight hens produce approximately 20% fewer eggs on average compared to feed restricted hens during a typical laying cycle.

## FEEDING DEVELOPING BREEDERS (continued)

For best results, feed restriction should begin at about 2 weeks of age. However, for practical reasons, it normally starts at about 7 weeks. From the time restriction starts, and up until the breeders are sufficiently mature (about 28 weeks of age for Pekin ducks), their daily feed intake should be limited to 60 – 70% of the amount they would eat ad lib. Feed restriction requires hand feeding a weighed amount of feed to the flock each day. Since the ducks are very hungry at the time of feeding, the feed must be spread out so that all ducks have a chance to eat. Feed can be spread out in long wooden troughs, on a cement slab, or on the ground (if the area is dry and clean).

## FEEDING LAYING BREEDERS

Laying breeders are fed layer rations that contain a higher level of calcium when compared to other duck rations. This is due to the laying duck's need for additional calcium for eggshell formation. When enough calcium is included in the ration, it is not necessary to feed oyster shells in addition. However, it will do no harm to make oyster shells available. Some commercial duck producers have found it beneficial to restrict feed to some degree during the laying period.

Ducks are easy to raise because they are hardy and not susceptible to many of the common poultry diseases. The use of medicated feeds are not usually necessary. Very few additives have been approved for nutritional or medicinal use in duck feeds. Waterfowl may be more sensitive to some drugs than other poultry. Incorrect use of certain medicated feeds formulated for chickens and turkeys could harm ducklings. Please consult a nutritionist/veterinarian before including any medication in the feed.

# EPOL'S DUCK FEED RANGE

		PRODUCT	MAXI CHICKS DUCK BREEDER	MEGAGRO DUCK STARTER	MEGAGRO DUCK GROWER
		ACT 36/1947 REG. NO.	V1809	V30898	V30899
INGREDIENT	MIN/MAX	UNIT	QUANTITY		
PROTEIN	min	g/kg	170	180	170
MOISTURE	min	g/kg	120	120	120
FAT	min	g/kg	25	25	25
FIBRE	max	g/kg	70	50	60
CALCIUM	min/max	g/kg	25 / 35	6 / 10	5 / 10
PHOSPHORUS	min	g/kg	4	5	4
			RECOMMENDED FEED INTAKE		
			Feed without grain from point of lay.	Feed without grain ad lib from 0 – 2 weeks of age.	Feed without grain ad lib from 2 weeks till slaughter.



## CONTACT INFORMATION

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Rustenburg	(087) 365 0564
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