

About Happy Chicken Farm Meat Chickens

The Farm: The Happy Chicken Farm is located at 1474 Wain Rd. in North Saanich. This is where Joan, Vincent, and their son Robert have lived for about 15 years. About 10 years ago we started keeping chickens as a hobby to supply ourselves with eggs and meat. That hobby has gradually grown out of control to the point where we now raise about 250 meat chickens a year and are still expanding to keep up with the demand! We also usually have 50-75 laying hens at any given time.

The Chickens: We use commercial breeds of meat chickens, usually a Cornish Cross or Cornish Giant. We get them as day old chicks, usually two or three times a year and hand raise them for 8 to 9 weeks to slaughter weight. We do not beak trim the chicks or subject them to any other inhumane treatment.

The Feed: We support Vancouver Island farmers by buying our chicken feed from the "Top Shelf" feed mill in Duncan. In conversation with them we have learned that they source ingredients as locally as possible, many from Island farmers and they do not source any ingredients from China. We start the day old chicks on 20% protein non-medicated starter crumble and when they are about 2 weeks old, transition them to 16% protein grower crumble. At about 4 weeks of age we again transition them to a mixture of 17% roaster pellets and 16% non-GMO layer pellets. We do not feed medications or artificially added hormones to our chickens at any time.

The Method: We use a version of the "Chicken Tractor" system detailed in the book "Chicken Tractor" by Andy Lee and Pat Foreman. We found that typical chicken tractor designs were not well adapted to the Vancouver Island climate so we designed our own that takes into account our damp cool winters and warm dry summers. "Chicken tractors" are shelters that protect the chickens from weather and predators while giving them access to grass through the open bottom so they can scratch around and eat the grass, dirt, and bugs and take dust baths as chickens like to do. Our shelters are 10' X 12' and on wheels so we can easily move them to a new patch of grass every day. As a bonus, if one of the shelters is not being used for chickens it makes a nifty small greenhouse! Chickens kept using this method are commonly referred to as "pastured poultry" as compared to "free run" or "free range". See the top of the next page for a photo of our prototype chicken tractor, appropriately named the "Eggsperiment". If you would like to learn more about our custom designed chicken tractors and meat production methods give us a call at 250-656-0365.

The Processing: Due to the BC Government meat processing regulations in order to legally sell our chickens we must transport them to Duncan for processing and accept the abattoir's methods and policies. This stresses the chickens and adds time and cost to the process. We don't like this any more than the chickens do! Just recently the BC Government enacted legislation establishing a new class of abattoir that enables farmers to process and sell directly to the public on a small scale basis. We are investigating the possibilities of obtaining a license.



The Meat: BC meat processing regulations forbid us from cutting meat so Happy Chicken Farm chickens are available only as whole chickens. We raise our chickens a bit longer than commercial chicken farms so the dressed weights are usually between 2 and 3 kilograms (4-6 pounds)

How to Buy: We fully support the North Saanich Farm Market and plan to be at the market August 21 and 28 / 2010 to take pre-orders for fresh chickens for delivery on September 2 and November 4 at our farm gate, 1474 Wain Rd. We sell frozen chickens in the Fall and Winter until we run out. For 2010 the price is \$9.35/KG (\$4.25/lb.) Give us a call (250-656-0365) or email (vsullivan@shaw.ca) to see if we have stock or to place an advance order.

Take care and eat well!

July 2010

2010 Happy Chicken Farm Chicken Order Form

Name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Number of Chickens for September 2: _____

Number of chickens for November 4: _____