



BILLINGS FARM & MUSEUM

CHICK IT OUT!



At Billings Farm we have a few different heritage breeds of chickens. A heritage breed is a breed that was recognized prior to the 20th century. Billings has some Barred Rocks, Buff Cochins, and Rhode Island Reds. Every year we purchase eggs to hatch on the farm and add to our coop. The eggs we buy don't look any different than the eggs you buy at the grocery store, but there are some important differences you can't see.

First, the hen must mate with a rooster before she lays her egg for it to be fertilized. Once she lays her eggs, she will sit on them, this is called brooding. It's important that eggs are kept at 100 degrees and 60% humidity for them to develop properly. The eggs need to be turned many times a day to keep them healthy. A hen will lay on her eggs for over 23 hours a day until they hatch. It takes about 21 days for a fertilized egg to hatch out into a chick.



A newly-hatched chick only weighs 45 grams, that's only 1.5 ounces! Chicks have something called an egg tooth which is a small, sharp point on the end of their beak. Once the chick has hatched the egg tooth will eventually break off. The chick will use its egg tooth to peck small holes in the shell and push against it until they are free.



This process can take hours and is exhausting for the new chicks.

Young female chicks are called pullets and young male chicks are called cockerels. When they grow to full size the females are called hens and the males are called roosters.

CHICKEN FACTS

- There are over **23 billion** chickens in the world.
- Chickens originated in the jungles of East Asia.
- Chickens can live 5-10 years.
- Chickens will lay on about 12 eggs at a time to hatch them.
- The US is eating more than **95 million** eggs a year.
- Chicks have **egg teeth** which help them peck their way out of the egg.
- Chickens can see ultraviolet light as well as the wavelengths people can see.
- Chickens are one of the closest living relatives to the **T rex!**
- Chicks and chickens bathe in dust instead of water.
- **Antarctica** is the only continent without chickens.

CHICKEN BREEDS & EGG COLOR



Rhode Island Red:
lay brown eggs



Buff Orpington: lay
light brown eggs



White Leghorn: lay
white eggs



Wyandotte: lay light
brown eggs



Ameraucana:
lay blue eggs



Dutch Bantam: lay
cream colored eggs

COLOR YOUR OWN CHICKEN!

