EPS-010 10/16

# Selecting LAYING BREEDS for Backyard Poultry Gregory S. Archer\*

When selecting laying hens for your backyard, you need to consider what it is that you expect from your chickens. Do want to raise poultry as a business to make a profit? Do you want to produce eggs to reduce your grocery bill? Or, do you want poultry in your back yard just for your own use and satisfaction?

If you want to raise poultry for profit or for eggs, egg-laying ability, space needs, and broodiness will be important factors to consider. You will want birds that lay many eggs to maximize your efficiency. Having birds that require less space or do well in cages may also be important if you plan to have a large flock. Finally, choosing birds that are not usually broody will minimize the time your birds are not laying eggs.

If you want birds only for your own use, the factors mentioned above may be less important. If your goal is to raise birds (in a way you find acceptable) to produce food for yourself, and maximum production numbers are not important, the number of breeds that can meet your needs increases dramatically. In this case, you may also be selecting birds based on their appearance. Chickens vary in the color and pattern of their feathers, combs, eggs, and even size. Regardless of why you want to have chickens, it is important to



select birds that will fit your needs and do well in your environment.

The following terms are important to understand as you select the breed that will best fit your situation.

**Broodiness:** readiness to brood eggs that is characterized by cessation of laying and by marked changes in behavior and physiology

**Bantam:** any of numerous small domestic fowls that are often miniature versions of the standard breeds

Popular breeds for backyard egg production can be found on the following pages.

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### Ameraucana



Egg Production	Medium
Aggressiveness	Low
Broodiness	Medium
Space needs	Medium
Bantam available	No
Climate	Any
Egg Color	Blue

### **Australorp**



Egg Production	High
Aggressiveness	Low
Broodiness	Medium
Space needs	Medium
Bantam available	Yes
Climate	Any
Egg Color	Brown

### Ancona



Egg Production	High	
	riigii	
Aggressiveness	Low	
Broodiness	Low	
Space needs	High	
Bantam available	Yes	
Climate	Any	
Egg Color	White	

### Brahma



Medium
Low
Medium
High
Yes
Any
Brown Brown and about



Egg Production	High
Aggressiveness	Medium
Broodiness	Low
Space needs	High
Bantam available	No
Climate	Any
Egg Color	White my misself and no bo

### Catalana



Egg Production	neet vour needs increa dpiH	
Aggressiveness	Medium Andread Medium	
Broodiness	rance. Chickens vary wol e co	
Space needs	feethers, combs, eggs high wes	
Bantam available	No No was or may now you	
Climate	Does well in hotter climates	
Egg Color	White	

# Chochin



<b>Egg Production</b>	Medium	
Aggressiveness	Low	
Broodiness	High	
Space needs	Medium	
Bantam available	Yes	
Climate	Does well in colder climates	
Egg Color	Brown	

# Dominique



Egg Production	High moleculos
Aggressiveness	Low
Broodiness	Medium
Space needs	High absences
Bantam available	No old eldelieve meta
Climate	Any C
Egg Color	Brown

# Cornish



Egg Production	Low	igg Production
Aggressiveness	High	\ggressiveness
Broodiness	Medium	troodings
Space needs	High	pace needs
Bantam available	Yes	lentam avallable
Climate demile reblect	Any	Jimate
Egg Color	Brown	gg Color

# Hamburg



Egg Production	High	gg Production
Aggressiveness	Low	ggressiveness
Broodiness	Low	roodiness
Space needs	High	pace needs
Bantam available	Yes	eldelievs metne
Climate	Any	limate
Egg Color	White	eg Color

# Delaware



Egg Production	High	Egg Production
Aggressiveness	Low	Aggressiveness
Broodiness	Medium	Broodiness
Space needs	Medium	Space needs
Bantam available	No zeY	Bantam available
Climate Standard	Any	Climate
Egg Color	Brown	igg Color

# Java



Egg Production	High	g Production
Aggressiveness	Low	ggressiveness
Broodiness	Medium	eodiness
Space needs	High	ace needs
Bantam available	Yes and	ntam available
Climate	Any VIIA	imate
Egg Color	Brown	g Color

# **Jersey Giant**



<b>Egg Production</b>	Medium	
Aggressiveness	Low	Aggressiveness
Broodiness	Low	Sroodiness
Space needs	High	Space needs
Bantam available	No M	Sentam available
Climate	Does well in colder climates	
Egg Color	Brown	

# Leghorn



Egg Production	High	
Aggressiveness	Medium	
Broodiness	Low	
Space needs	Low-Cage; High-Free range	
Bantam available	Yes	
Climate	Any	
Egg Color	White	

# La Fleche



<b>Egg Production</b>	Medium	
Aggressiveness	Low	
Broodiness	Low	
Space needs	High III steeds	
Bantam available	Yes as Aldallava mate	
Climate	Does well in hotter climates	
Egg Color	White	

### Marans



<b>Egg Production</b>	Medium molipubors pr	
Aggressiveness	Low	
Broodiness	Medium	
Space needs	Medium	
Bantam available	Yes 29Y eldallava mate	
Climate	Does well in colder climates	
Egg Color	Brown	

# Lakenvelder



High	
Low	ggressiveness
Low	ceetiboo
High	sace needs
Yes	eldeliave metne
Any	imate
White	1g Color
	Low Low High Yes Any

# Minorca



Egg Production	High	
Aggressiveness	Medium	
Broodiness	Low	
Space needs	High	
Bantam available	Yes old allows ma	
Climate	Does well in hot climates	
Egg Color	White	

### **New Hampshire** Red



Egg Production	High and	moo.
Aggressiveness	Low	
Broodiness	High WWW	Hatchery
Space needs	High	
Bantam available	Yes	
Climate	Any	cecua
Egg Color	Brown	

## **Rhode Island** ese sheek se



<b>Egg Production</b>	caedehatchery.com dpiH
Aggressiveness	Medium
Broodiness	Low
Space needs	High
Bantam available	Yes
Climate	Any
Egg Color	Brown

# **Orpington**



Egg Production	High	<del></del>
Aggressiveness	Low	
Broodiness	High	
Space needs	Medium	
Bantam available	Yes	
Climate	Any	unarinto Hisabi
Egg Color	Brown	sildua sidt at show

Sussex



Egg Production	High	
Aggressiveness	Low	
Broodiness	Medium	
Space needs	Medium	
Bantam available	Yes	
Climate	Any	_
Egg Color	White	-

### **Plymouth** Rocks



<b>Egg Production</b>	High
Aggressiveness	Low
Broodiness	Low
Space needs	Medium
Bantam available	Yes
Climate	Any make sabriag to materiate lauxes
Egg Color	Brown

### **Wyandotte**



Egg Production	High
Aggressiveness	Low
Broodiness	High
Space needs	High
Bantam available	Yes
Climate Management	Any meno
Egg Color	Brown

### Hatcheries to obtain birds from include:

### **Cackle Hatchery**

PO Box 529 Lebanon, MO 65536 (417) 532-4581 cacklehatchery.com

### Hoffman Hatchery Inc.

P.O. Box 129 Gratz, PA 17030 (717) 365-3694 www.hollmanhatchery.com

### **Ideal Poultry**

PO Box 591 Cameron, TX 76520 (254) 679-6677 www.ideal-poultry.com

### **Meyer Hatchery**

626 State Route 89 Polk, OH 44866 (888)568-9755 www.meyerhatchery.com

### **Murray McMurray Hatchery**

P.O. Box 458
191 Closz Drive
Webster City, Iowa 50595
(800) 454-3280
www.mcmurrayhatchery.com

### Ridgway Hatcheries, Inc.

615 North High Street Box 306 Larue, Ohio 43332 (740) 499-2163 ridgwayhatchery.com

# Stromberg's Chicks and Game Birds

100 York Street
P.O. Box 400
Pine River, MN 56474
(800) 720-1134
www.strombergschickens.com

### **Welp Hatchery**

PO BOX 77 Bancroft, Iowa 50517 (800) 458-4473 www.welphatchery.com

Thank you to Ideal Hatchery for the use of the artwork in this publication.

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