

POULTRY TERMS QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

BIRDS ARE CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO CLASS, BREED, VARIETY, SEX AND AGE.

GENERAL POULTRY TERMS:

BREED – Each breed has a distinct shape and temperament of its own

BROODING – The process of caring for newly hatched chicks

CLASS – This refers to the origin of the bird as part of the classification system. Example: American Class – Rhode Island Reds, Plymouth Rocks, and New Hampshires

EXHIBITION BIRDS – Birds raised based on aesthetics, not on production capability

FINISH – Completion of growth, ideal weight, ideal size, and perfection of plumage

POULTRY – Any kind of domesticated bird

PRODUCTION BIRDS – Birds solely raised on production capability

SEX – Either female or male

SYMMETRY – Perfection of proportion of shape in all sections of the fowl

VARIETY – Feather pattern, feather color and comb determine the variety of a bird within a breed.

Example: White Leghorn and Brown Leghorn are separate varieties due to the difference in their feather pattern

STRUCTURE / BODY PARTS:

AXIAL FEATHERS (KEY FEATHER) - Short feather between primary and secondary feathers of the wing

COVERTS - Feathers that cover primary and secondary wing and tail feathers

FLUFF - Soft downy feathers located at the base of the shaft: Soft downy feathers on lower thighs and abdomen

HACKLE FEATHERS (CAPE FEATHERS) - Neck plumage: Males exhibit thin and pointed feathers;

Females exhibit thick and rounded feathers

HOCK – Joint between the thigh and shank

PARTI-COLORED – Fowl having feathers of 2 or more colors or shades of color. Example: Banded Plymouth Rock

PRIMARY FEATHERS - Longer wing feathers growing from the outer section (completely hidden when wing is folded under)

QUILL - Hollow shaft of where feather is attached to the body

SADDLE FEATHERS - Long and pointed back plumage of back at the base of tail feathers. Prominent on male fowl

SECONDARY FEATHERS - Longer wing feathers growing from middle section

(Exposed when the wing is folded under)

SHAFT - Extension of quill through the entire length of feather

SHANK – The portion of fowl's leg below the hock

SICKLE FEATHERS - Long tail feathers of male fowl

SPUR - Hard projectile on inner side of shanks

WATTLE - Thin growths of red colored flesh on the sides of the upper throat on fowl. More pronounced on mature males

CHICKEN TERMS:

BABY CHICK – Chick just hatched usually 1 to 7 days old

BROILER or FRYER – A young meat bird chicken of either sex butchered around 4-8 weeks of age

CAPON – A castrated male chicken with soft skin or tender flesh

COCK (OLD ROOSTER) – A mature male over 12 months of age

COCKEREL – A male chicken under 12 months of age

HEN – A mature female chicken over 12 months of age

PULLET – A female chicken under 12 months of age

ROASTER – A young chicken of either sex usually butchered after 8 weeks of age

WATERFOWL TERMS:

BEAN - A hardened bean-like bulge on the upper portion of the bill

DRAKE – A male duck

DUCK – A female duck

DUCKLING – A young duck

GANDER – A male goose

GOOSE – A female goose

GOSLING – A young goose

SCOOP BILL - Depression located at the top of the bill

TURKEY TERMS:

HEN – A female turkey

POULT – A young turkey before its sex can be determined

TOM – A male turkey

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

www.inpoultry.com/raising-your-birds

www.aphis.usda.gov/animalhealthdefendtheflock