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# **Keeping Chickens. There's Negatives As Well As Positives**

## **There's a good and bad side to keeping chickens, but the good outweighs the bad**

There's no doubt that keeping chickens can be a stack of fun. Our family certainly loves it, particularly the children, and in our view chooks are pretty much the ideal pet. There's lots of positives to keeping chickens, but there are also some negatives, so let's have a look at both the positives and negatives of keeping chooks.

### **Lets consider the positives first.**

#### *1. All those yummy free range eggs.*

You can't go past fresh free range eggs to eat. Nothing in the supermarket will beat them. Enough said.

#### *2. Get rid of nasty bugs.*

If you allow your chooks to free range around the garden then they will clean up many nasty bugs for you. They love to scratch to uncover those bugs. A couple of summers ago we had a massive grasshopper plague throughout the area where we live. But you should have seen how quick our chickens gobbled up hundreds of grasshoppers every day.



Image via [Wikipedia](#)

#### *3. Have wonderful pets.*

Our kids just love their chooks. Don't assume that just because they are birds they won't make a good pet. Chooks are wonderful pets.

#### *4. Have fresh clean meat.*

Some people kill their chickens for food and others do not. Some are horrified at the thought of killing their own chickens. We have in the past killed roosters for food as there is very little you can do with roosters and mostly nobody else wants them. Currently however we have found someone else who is happy to take them off our hands.

If you choose to kill your own birds to eat you can be confident in the knowledge that you are getting clean, fresh free range chicken meat that does not have any of the downsides of supermarket chicken. They are not cage reared (see the photo), they are not fed antibiotics and they have had a good life up to a certain point.

## **Now let's look at some of the negatives.**

### *1. You don't get eggs all the time.*

Sad to say but most good laying hens will still take some time off during the year for a rest. We generally find that we get few if any eggs during winter. So despite the fact that we have a yard full of chooks we do find ourselves buying eggs over winter. Of course we still have to feed them and despite the fact that we feed them or our vegetable scraps we still use commercial layers pellets which of course cost money.

### *2. Crows*

It seems that where we live has been invaded by crows. This may not be the case where you live near us huge families of crows seem to have moved in. Explanations we have seen include that last year's bushfires burned a lot of their feed and they have moved into more populated areas in search of food. Sadly they are using our eggs as food.

Crows are particularly wily, and once they discover where the eggs are laid it's very hard to stop them getting the eggs, we have been struggling with this for some months. Crows are getting into our chicken coop and stealing our eggs and we have not been able to stop it.

### *3. Chooks get sick.*

Whilst it's probably fair to say that chooks are relatively healthy they aren't healthy all the time. Currently we have one of our chooks living in a box in the house as she seems to be unwell. And from time to time we go into the chook yard and discover a dead chook. Of course everything dies, but this is distressing to the children.

### *4. Scratching.*

Whilst it is true, as we said, that chooks will eat up so many nasty bugs around your garden they do so combined with lots of scratching to uncover them. This can make a little mess of your garden unless you attempt to control it somehow, though it does aerate the soil.

### *5. There's some work involved.*

If you are keeping chickens you need to be prepared for some work. This will include regular cleaning of the chicken coop, cleaning of food and water containers and pest control measures. Chickens can suffer from various infestations including mites, which we will talk about another day, however you do need to spend some time and do some work preventing this.

That's a few of the positives and negatives of keeping chickens. In our view the positives outweigh the negatives enormously.

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