

WHAT ARE POULTRY?

Poultry is the name given to birds that provide us with meat or eggs. The **chicken**, the **turkey**, the **duck** and the **goose** are the birds most commonly kept by farmers in Ireland. All types of poultry have two wings, two scaly legs and are covered in **feathers** but they can be different from each other too.

A female chicken is called a hen and a newborn chicken is called a chick. A male chicken is called a cock or a rooster and a young male chicken is called a cockerel. Chickens live in large groups called flocks.

CHICKENS, TURKEYS, DUCKS AND GESE: THE SIMILARITIES

The chicken and the turkey are similar in two main ways. They both have feet called **claws** that are used for scratching the earth and finding food. They also both have sharp **beaks** for pecking at insects and grain. The duck and the goose are also similar to each other. They both have **bills**, which help them to eat certain types of food. The duck's bill allows it to feed in water while the goose's bill allows it to pick up grass. Both the duck and the goose have **webbed feet**, which help them to swim.



WHAT ARE THE FUNCTIONS OF POULTRY?

We get meat, eggs and feathers from poultry.

EGGS

Eggs from chickens, ducks and geese are eaten and used to make many different meals. For example, eggs are used in the cooking of omelettes, quiches and pancakes. Alternatively, eggs can be eaten alone when fried, boiled or poached.



POULTRY FARMING

Free-range eggs and meat can be bought in many shops and supermarkets. For eggs and meat to be labelled as free-range, they must come from hens that spend most of their time outdoors. This means that the poultry can wander about outside, pecking, scratching and taking dust-baths. Chickens that are not free-range are kept indoors, allowing them to produce more eggs. Due to the high demand for chicken, eggs and meat, this is the most common method of farming used in Ireland.

MEAT

While chicken meat is the most popular, the meat of all four birds is eaten. Roast **turkey** is a traditional dish at Christmas in Ireland, though in certain parts of the country a goose is more traditional.



TEXTILES

The feathers from ducks, geese and turkeys can be used to make blankets, pillows and clothes such as hats and scarves.



QUILLS

Feathers from geese and turkeys have been used for many years as pens. These special pens are called **quills** and are dipped in ink before writing.

