Chicken Tractor
Mobile Chicken Housing

This is intended as a guide for design of housing for village flocks. There can be a wide degree of variation depending upon available materials, required size and specific needs. The plans are for a chicken house and run with a base of 10 feet by 6 feet. This will house 12 chickens without overcrowding. The chicken house is designed for mobility, easily moved by four people yet allowing the chickens to be moved to fresh ground so they may forage and scratch for a portion of their nutritional needs.

Benefits of Mobile Chicken Housing

1. Allows access to fresh ground so the chickens might scratch and forage for themselves.
2. Allows for easy accessibility to eggs before predators find them
3. Consolidates the chicken manure so that it might be collected for composting
4. Reduces loss to predators of young or adult birds not only because of the protection of the pen itself, but because frequent moving of the pen keeps larger predators guessing as to the defenses of the coop as a whole.
5. Reduces disease by limiting contact with diseased birds

Materials

Materials may include a variety of substitutions; bamboo or fiber netting for wire mesh. Strong straight wooden poles in place of finished boards and any number of materials may be substituted for the covered part of the house that provides protection from sun and rain. Access doors may be hinged with leather or heavy fabric and may be sized to available materials.

The structure is built with:

1. Two sheets of corrugated metal or plastic approx 6 ft x 5 ft.
2. 48 feet of 4 x 1 inch finished board for base and ridge (3 – 10 ft. pieces and 3 – 6 ft. pieces)
3. 70 feet of 3 x 1 ½ inch for rafters
4. 40 feet of 2 x 1 ½ inch for doors and door frame
5. Wire netting to cover 108 + sq. feet
6. 2 – 12 ft. 3 x 1 for mobile handles
7. 2 5-foot dowels for perches
8. Two hinges
9. additional scrap lumber for ties, door lock and nesting boxes

Construction Notes

If a flat surface is available, it is helpful the lay the rafter boards flat on the ground matching the angles and length shown on the plans. Once one rafter set is cut, it can serve as a pattern for cutting the rest of the A-frame rafters. Ties of wood scraps or metal ties can be used at the ridge of the rafters, below the rafter beam to secure the top ridge board in place. It may be easier to

cover the ends of the house with wire netting or solid protective material of choice, before erection of the coop.
An additional baseboard that runs between the rafters adds structural strength to the coop. Consider placing it at the point where the protective covering starts. After construction, consider coating or painting the coop with a whitewash or protective paint to weather/waterproof the structure. Perches should be added by sliding the dowels through the wire mesh so that the perches rest on the frame of the mobile handles. Be sure and place perches at the same level to avoid fighting for a “top” perch.

Nest Boxes

Hens will instinctively lie in dark and protected places. Nesting boxes can be any box, preferably wood that measures approximately 12 inches square. A wooden crate with the top half removed on one side works perfectly. When installing the next boxes consider how easily you will be able to access the eggs. Nest boxes can be lined with straw, dry grass or wood chips, but they may also be left bare.

General Notes

- Ties of wood scraps or metal ties can be used at the ridge of the rafters, below the rafter beam to secure the top ridge board in place.
- It may be easier to cover the ends of the house with wire netting or solid protective material of your choice, before erecting of the coop.
- An additional baseboard running between the base boards at the junction of the sheltered area and the run area will offer structural strength to the coop.
- After construction, consider coating or painting the coop with a whitewash or protective paint to weather/waterproof the structure.
- Perches should be added by sliding dowels through the wire mesh so that the perches rest on the frame of the handles. Be sure and place perches at the same level to avoid fighting for a "top" perch.