

# Quail farming

## Introduction to quail farming

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### Advantages of quail farming

- Requires minimum floor space
- Needs low investment
- Quails are comparatively sturdy birds
- Can be marketed at an early age ie. five weeks
- Early sexual maturity - starts laying eggs in about six to seven weeks of age
- High rate of egg laying -280 eggs per year
- Quail meat is tastier than chicken and has less fat content. It promotes body and brain development in children.
- Nutritionally, the quail eggs are on par with that of chicken eggs. Moreover, they contain less cholesterol.
- Quail meat and eggs are a nutritious diet for pregnant and nursing mothers

## Housing management of quails

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### 1. Deep litter system

- 6 quails can be reared in a sq.ft. of floor space.
- After 2 weeks, Quails can be reared in cages. This will help to gain good body weight, as unnecessary wandering of animals is avoided.

### 2. Cage System



Age	Cage Size	No.of birds
First 2 weeks	3 x 2.5 x 1.5 ft.	100
3- 6 weeks	4 x 2 .5 x 1.5 ft.	50

### Quails in cage system of rearing

- Each unit is about 6 feet in length and 1 foot in width, and subdivided into 6 subunits.
- To save space, the cages can be arranged upto 6 tiers high. There can be 4 to 5 cages in a row.
- The bottom of the cage is fixed with removable wooden plates to clean the bird droppings.
- Long narrow feed troughs are placed in front of the cages. Water troughs are placed at the back of the cages.
- Commercial egg layers are usually housed in colonies of 10-12 birds per cage. For breeding purposes, male quails are introduced in the cages in the ratio of 1 to 3 females.

## Feeding management of quails

Feed can be formulated as follows.

Feed Ingredients	Chick mash	Grower mash
	0-3 weeks	4-6 weeks
Maize	27	31
Sorghum	15	14

Deoiled RiceBran	8	8
Groundnut Cake	17	17
Sunflower Cake	12.5	12.5
Soya meal	8	-
Fishmeal	10	10
Mineral Mixture	2.5	2.5
Shell grit	-	5

- Feed material should be made of small particles
- A 5 weeks old quail consumes about 500 gms of feed
- Quails of 6 month old, consumes about 30-35 gms of feed per day.
- Quails require about 400 gms feed for the production of 12 eggs.
- Broiler starter mash can be used by adding 5 kg of oil cakes to 75 feed. The particle size is reduced by grinding the feed for one more time.

## General management of quails



- At the age of six weeks, female quails usually weigh 175-200 g and the males weigh about 125-150 g
- Female quails start laying eggs at 7 weeks of age and continue upto 22 weeks of age
- Usually egg laying happens during the evening time of the day
- The quail egg usually weighs about 9-10 g

- The breast of the male quail is usually narrow and covered with equally distributed brown and white feathers. But the female quail has a broad breast covered with brown feathers with black dots.
- The female and male quails should be separated at the age of four weeks
- Sixteen hours of light per day should be available to the egg laying quails
- **Management of quail chicks**

The day old quail chicks usually weigh 8-10 g. Hence, the quail chicks need more temperature. Absence of adequate temperature and exposure to high speed cool wind leads to clustering of young ones, which results in high mortality.

## Breeding management of quails

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### Quail eggs



- Quails start laying their eggs at the age of 7th week. They attain 50% egg production at 8th week of age
- In order to produce fertile eggs, the male quails should be reared along with the females at 8-10 weeks of age
- The male, female ratio is 1:5
- Incubation period in quails is 18 days
- With 500 female quails we can produce 1500 quail chicks per week

### Quail Meat



## Diseases of quails

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- When there is deficiency of vitamins and minerals in the female quail breeders, the chicks obtained from their fertile eggs are usually lean with weak legs. To prevent this the breeder females should be provided with optimum minerals and vitamins in their feed
- Generally quails are resistant to infectious diseases than chicken. So there is no vaccination required for quails
- Proper management of quail chicks, disinfecting farm premises, providing clean drinking water to quails and feeding of quality concentrate feed will prevent disease outbreaks in quail farms
- **Source: Handbook on Animal Husbandry, ICAR and Text books on poultry production**

## Challenges in quail rearing

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- Male quails usually make a different sound which is usually disturbing to the human
- When rearing the male and female quails together, the male quails peck the other quails and make them blind. At times, death of the quails are also noticed.

## Licence requirement for quail farming

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Quail being a protected species, a government license is required to sell it commercially. In India, the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairy and Fisheries is responsible to grant such license as delegated by the Ministry of Environment and Forests. Several quail licenses have been already issued (more than 500 in Maharashtra State only).

Here are the important **terms and conditions for Quail license** as per letter No.3-22/84 - FRY (WL) dated 27.06.1997 of Ministry of Environment and Forests, New Delhi:

- Validity of license up to one year from the date of issue & shall be charged Rs. 200/-, 500/-, 500/- & 1000/- each purpose respectively for farming, Trading, catering & Hatchery. It can be renewed before expiry of current license with requisite fees.
- The purchaser should purchase quails from a license holder.

- Issuing authority can inspect the facilities available at site any time during the period of license.
- Nonfunctional licenses are likely to be canceled before expiry, with prior intimation.
- Preconditions for quail farming and/or quail trading:
  - The farm should be located at not less than 4.5 to 5.0 km. away from the notified forest area if there is no human habitation in between.
  - The farm should be located at a distance not less than 2.5 to 3.0 km away from wildlife & forest area where there is human habitation between the farm & forest/ wildlife notified area.
  - The farm should not be closed to water logged area.
  - The farm should strictly observe bio-security measures particularly hygiene & sanitation within enclosures & provide basic health cover for the birds. Birds should not be allowed to roaming the open outside enclosures.
  - There should be adequate fencing around the farm/ building to avoid entry of stray animals & for the public to come in direct contact with birds.
  - License shall be issued subject to production of original documents for identity as follows: ration Card, Driving License, Election I-card or Valid Identity card.