

How to start a poultry farm (Part 6)

by Jan Grobbelaar of the Agricultural Research Council (ARC)

Airflow is the amount of air that moves through the chicken house. Airflow (ventilation) is a very important aspect of a poultry house and you must always ensure that it is sufficient without being draughty. The aim of airflow is to control the temperature (within limits), bring in oxygen and to remove moisture and toxic gases from the house.

How can I create airflow in a poultry house?

When you use the natural method of ventilation you use the wind to your advantage. To do this, you must construct the chicken house in such a way that you are able to use the wind to create the ventilation.

It is best to rotate the house in such a way that its open side faces the direction where most of the wind comes from. Take care that there are no trees, hedges or other obstructions in the vicinity of your open-sided chicken house that can prevent the air from flowing through the house. It is always good to remove any obstacle that will influence the airflow. There are various ways of controlling the wind to create airflow through the building.

Centrally pivoting flaps

This is one of the methods to control the openings, and to control the direction of the air entering and the leaving the building.

Chicken houses generally have a roof height of 2-3 metres. The flaps should begin about 1,5 m from the floor and should extend for about 0,6 m. They should be able to rotate 180 degrees in order to allow for high and low levels of ventilation in the building. They are opened differently during summer and winter.

You can replace the centrally pivoting flaps with solid flaps. If you do, you must secure the hinges on the bottom wall to allow the flaps to open on the inside of the building from the top to the bottom.

Plastic curtains

Plastic curtains are another way of controlling the airflow through the house. This is a very easy way of controlling the airflow if it is fitted and used correctly.

How does the curtain work?

- The side curtains are fixed to the wall to prevent the curtains moving away from the wall when the wind blows strongly, allowing unwanted wind to get into the house
- The bottom part of the curtain is also attached to the wall to prevent the curtains from moving away from the wall
- The main curtain moves between and under the side-curtains to prevent them from blowing away from the house
- The curtain is controlled by turning a pulley
- The curtain must be open from the top to the bottom to allow the right amount of airflow to enter the house. In doing this, you will be able to control the temperature.

In the next *Ubisi Mail*, you can learn more about the feed and drinking space (floor space) needed for the different chicken breeds and age groups. **UM**