

## A Day on the Farm

My name is Izzy and I live on a smallholding. I have thirty laying hens, three guineafowl and one cockerel called Roadrunner. Also, there are three pet hens that live in the garden they're called Mavis, Mable and my favourite Cheepy. Cheepy is a Barnevelder and Mavis and Mable are Peking Bantams. All the hens are free range. Free range is where the hens can run around on their own. We also have a cat and two dogs, the cat chases the rats and the dogs protect the hens from foxes and badgers.

Today was a very interesting day and what happened was:

In the morning I got up, let the layers out and fed them a mixture of layers pellets and mixed corn, I checked if they needed clean bedding and water. Mavis and Mable would not come out of their house this morning.

In the afternoon I fed the laying hens again and collected the eggs, when they were feeding I mucked them out. Mucking out involves getting a shovel and brush, scooping up the muck and sawdust that was put down and adding it to the midden so that it can slowly rot down for use as compost on the vegetable garden later. Once the hen house is cleaned out I put fresh clean sawdust down under where most of the poo lands when they are sleeping.

I collected 24 eggs today. I washed them, wrote the date on them and boxed them up. I asked mum how many eggs she wanted to keep back and then took two boxes to our wee egg shop at the road end. We sell eggs for £1 per box.

Mavis and Mable would not come out of their house because they were clocking. Clocking means the hens want to hatch eggs. To do this they need to sit very patiently on eggs for 21 days, keeping them warm until they hatch. Because Bantams are small I gave them only four eggs from the layers (these have been fertilised by the cockrel) each to sit on in their own coop in the garden.

I chose blue eggs to hatch. Blue eggs are laid by Cream Legbars, other breeds we have are Maran, Light Sussex and Barnevelders. At night dad shuts all the hens in when it gets dark so the foxes can't get in while the hens are sleeping.