

This book is a practical and comprehensive guide to the free-range management of chickens, on any scale. It is suitable for those setting up or managing a commercial free-range unit, for the breeder and enthusiast interested in pure breeds, and for the domestic poultry keeper. It is well researched and up to date in its coverage, with recent legislation changes, research findings and a detailed section on current planning permission requirements.

The book traces the history and development of domestic fowl, from the Red Jungle Fowl of Thailand, through the traditional pure breeds to the highly developed hybrids of today's free-range



sector. The changing pattern of free-range poultry keeping over the years is also examined, with breeds, old and new, illustrated in colour.

Welfare considerations are discussed, with details of the RSPCA's Freedom Food initiative for free-range eggs, as well as the standards for organic flocks. The need for conservation of the pure breeds as a unique and valuable genetic pool is explored.

There is advice on the best choice of birds for specific purposes, including egg production, table bird production, breeding to show standards and general-interest poultry keeping. Every aspect of poultry husbandry is covered, making this the definitive guide to modern free-range management.

Katie Thear, a lifetime poultry keeper, was the editor of *Country Smallholding* for many years and still contributes articles to the magazine. She is the author of several books on poultry, livestock and small farm management, and lectures on these topics in Britain and the USA. She has also taught Biology and Rural Studies, as well as advising on welfare and organic standards for free-range poultry.

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