



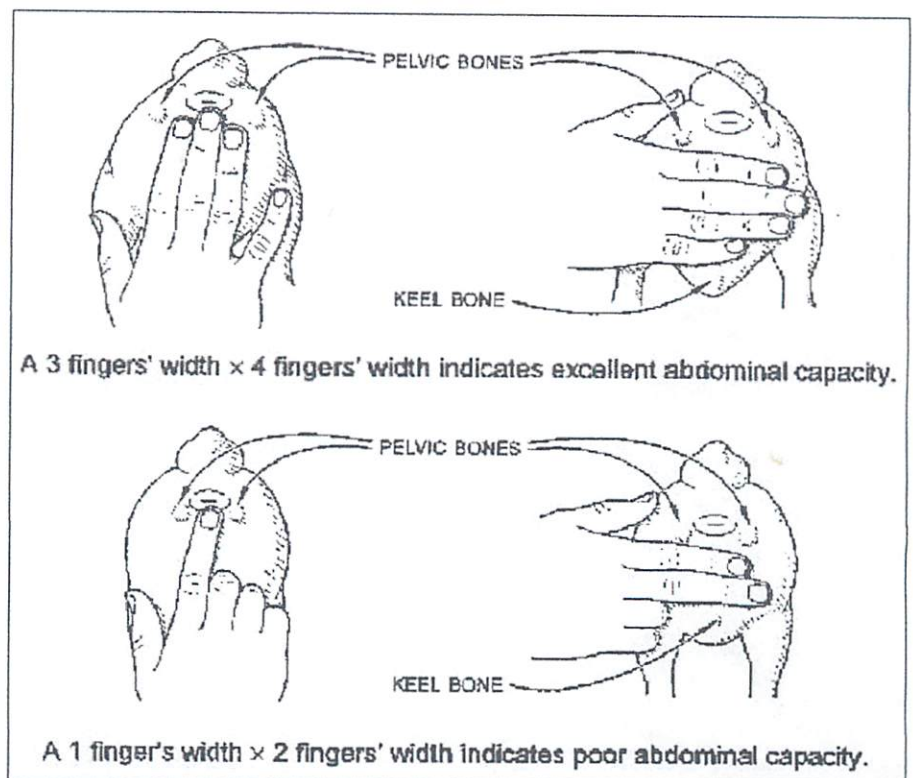
How to Choose Your Best Pullets for the Show



Head - The head should be broad and somewhat flat on top rather than round, wide between the eyes, and moderately long. The face should be clean cut, smooth, and wrinkle-free. The skin should be fine-grained and soft in texture, the comb substantial in size and rich in color. The eyes should be large and bright with the irises a rich reddish bay color, and the pupils distinctly round.

Body Conformation - The body should be broad, deep, and well-developed. This is important for adequate intestinal development, which is needed for quick digestion and absorption of food necessary for good egg production. Body depth can be determined by placing your finger tips on the back bone and your thumb across the middle of the keel (breastbone).

Females - Female chickens entered in the production category are judged on the basis of the ability to produce eggs -- in the past or currently. It is relatively easy to determine whether or not a hen is in egg production. Check the condition of the comb, pubic bones, abdomen, and vent. If a hen is laying, her comb and wattles should be large, red, soft, and waxy. The pubic bones should be thin, flexible and wide apart. The abdomen should be full, soft and pliable. The vent should be large, moist and free of pigment. A good layer should have more than a two-finger width between the pubic bones (also referred to as pelvic bones) and a three or more finger width between the pubic bones and the tip of the keel.



Feathering - The birds should be fully feathered with the plumage in good condition.

Feet and Toes - The bird should be well balanced on its legs. The feet and toes should be normal.

Sexual Maturity - The comb, wattles, and earlobes should be well-developed.

Comparison of good and poor layers.

Body part	Good layer	Poor layer
Carriage	active, alert	lazy, listless
Eyes	bright, sparkling	dull, sunken
Combs/Wattles	large, bright	small, pale
Shanks	thin, flat	round, full
Back	wide	narrow, tapered
Abdomen	deep, soft	shallow, hard
Pubic bones	wide apart, thin flexible	tight, stiff, thick
Vent	large, moist	puckered, dry

