

Estimated reading time: 5 minute(s)

Guinea fowls are wild species that originated from Africa. There are three common varieties of Guinea fowl: *pearl, lavender and white*.

The *Helmeted guinea fowl* (*Numida meleagris*) is the **the most commonly domesticated type under the pearl variety and its characterized by black or grey feathers with white spots and a central knob on the skull.**

According to Moreki, 2009 “Guinea fowl is a promising genetic resource for evolving a low input-grain saving poultry alternative for production in the developing countries.”

Competitive advantages of raising Guinea fowls

Guinea fowls have a 15 years life expectancy. They are **less susceptible to poultry diseases (Newcastle, Salmonellosis)** unlike the normal chicken birds, guinea fowls are **hardy** and **less capital intensive**.

Guineas are very loud, and most **farmers can use this as a protective method** for the farm. They are used for controlling *ticks, insects, snakes, termites and rodents*. Due to their **ability to tolerate high temperatures** which makes it possible for them to withstand transportation. They are **very social and like to stay in flocks**, that's why when one goes missing, rest assured that they will find each other.

✘Figure 1. *Picture of Helmet Pearl Guinea Fowls*

Meat production

The meat is **very lean, rich in essential fatty acids with fewer calories, rich in vitamin, high protein and breast meat yield is about 25%** of live weight with excellent meat to bone ratio. However, their meat is darker than chicken meat. Like another other meat type, the older the animal the tough it becomes, similarly to the guinea fowl, younger guineas have tender and juicy which gives of more flavour.

Egg production

Guineas can **lay up to 100 or more eggs per year**, especially if they are well managed and can harvest them all if kept in a confined area. Their eggs are smaller than chicken eggs and are very **hard shells** that reduces breakage. The eggs are light brown and **speckled with a very rich flavour**.

Farming systems

Choosing the type of farming system will primarily depend on the type of production (Egg or meat):

Extensive farming or free ranging is the most commonly used by most farmers, whereby the guineas are allowed to roam freely, and **this type of farming is suitable for meat production**. However, for egg production it's safer to practice intensive production. This allows you to keep the guineas in cages, control their movement and be able to collect eggs. Guinea fowls are known for being protective over their egg and would go in the woods, long grass and any thing that will hide them from harm.

References

Moreki J. C., 2009. Guinea Fowl Production. Retrieved from <http://cirrushillfarm.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Guinea-Fowl-Production-1.pdf>

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