

Muscovy ducks (makoue)

Muscovy ducks have a number of advantages over other poultry.

- The ducks are resistant to most diseases, including Newcastle disease. They therefore do not need expensive vaccines to stay healthy.

Housing

- Duck housing is far cheaper than broiler housing. The Muscovy duck does not need a pond either—water deep enough so that it can dip its head into it will also suffice.



- Housing can be built from material available in the vicinity. The ducks are free-ranging, but their wings have to be clipped to prevent them from flying into a neighbour's yard.

Products from ducks

- **Feathers** from ducks could be used for making pillows and duvets.
- The male Muscovy duck can reach a live mass of 4,8 kg in 12 weeks. The **meat** tastes rather like venison.
- The Muscovy duck can lay 195 **eggs** in a 40-week laying cycle. The eggs can also be eaten or used for baking.

Further plus points

- Muscovy ducks hatch their own eggs. One male for 4 to 7 females is needed to obtain good fertility.
- The ducks can be used to control all kinds of insects. This is an advantage in areas where flies are a problem.

Feeding

- Ducks can adapt to different environments, and can eat things that chickens, turkeys or other domestic animals cannot reach since they are good swimmers.
- You can feed Muscovy ducklings starter crumbles until the age of 4 weeks. After that, you can feed them broiler grower pellets until they are ready to be slaughtered at 12 weeks.
- Mature ducks can seek their own food, but they will lay better if you feed them laying pellets.

For further information on the subject, contact Mr M. D. Olver at the
Animal Nutrition and Animal Products Institute,
Private Bag X2, Irene 1675
or telephone him at (012) 672 9111

Compiled by the National Department of Agriculture and the Animal Nutrition and Animal Products Institute of the ARC

Printed and published in the Republic of South Africa by the National Department of Agriculture and obtainable from the Resource Centre, Directorate Communication, Private Bag X144, Pretoria 0001