

Working life

- Poultry workers usually work as least 39 hours per week. Generally they work set hours during the week plus weekend work and early mornings or evenings on occasions
- The Farm Manager would usually work six days per week but would be on-call 24 hours
- There may also be opportunities for part-time and casual work.

Getting in

- It is possible to enter the industry straight from school but it helps to have had some work experience on a farm
- Poultry Apprenticeship programmes are available with both training and assessment on the farm. They are open to all age groups above 16 years
- It is also possible to enter the industry by undertaking full or part time qualifications at college. For further details of appropriate courses see the careers pages on the Lantra website
- Degree courses are also available in agriculture, farm management, animal science or environmental science
- Poultry Passport.org is the official training and skills management programme for the British Poultry Training Scheme, administered by Poultec Training and Lantra. The British Poultry Training Scheme has defined the minimal training standards required or recommended, specific to job roles in the meat and egg industries.

Skills and personal qualities

- Ability to work safely
- Attention to detail
- Practical
- Responsible
- Reliable
- Ability to work in a team
- Ability to work alone
- Ability to use own initiative.



Types of jobs

Stockman

A Stockman is responsible for supporting the husbandry of the farm's birds. This will include ensuring they are fed and watered and looked after to meet health and welfare requirements as well as growth targets for birds bred for meat or egg production targets for laying birds.

With further training and experience, a stockman could gain promotion to a Chargehand or Farm Manager.

Responsibilities include:

- Looking after birds and monitoring their health and condition
- Feeding the correct diet to the birds at the correct rate
- Maintaining appropriate conditions for the birds
- Weighing the birds to monitor performance
- Maintaining accommodation
- Maintaining production targets.



Catcher

A Catcher in the poultry industry will catch birds, in order to move them, transport them or for treatment purposes. Catchers must be able to move calmly and quickly catch the birds with careful and specific handling guidelines to minimise stress and ensure the bird is not harmed in the process.

The birds will then be placed in special containers prior to loading for transportation or, if required, treated for example with vaccine. A Catcher could work in various types of farms and systems.

Some large poultry employers employ their own Catchers but most use professional independent catching teams.

Responsibilities include:

- Preparing containers and transport
- Handling birds
- Loading and unloading birds.

Vaccinator

A Vaccinator's role is to ensure that vaccinations can be administered to birds to prevent diseases occurring. This can be by injecting birds using a syringe and needle or administered via the water supply and through particle spraying onto the birds.

A Vaccinator needs to be able to handle birds without causing stress and know where in the bird, and how to administer vaccines. A Vaccinator may work with various ages of birds, and various types of farms and systems .

Responsibilities include:

- Handling and restraining birds
- Delivering treatments to birds
- Maintaining records.



Hatchery Assistant

Hatcheries supply chicks to the poultry industry. Hatching is done in a mechanically controlled environment and hatchery workers assist in the effective transfer of eggs from the setting of machines to the hatching machines. They also sort the chicks by grade into the required quantities for despatch to customers.

Responsibilities include:

- Receiving and selecting eggs for hatching
- Preparing, loading and incubating eggs
- Hatching eggs and despatching poultry.



Sexer

A Sexer works in a hatchery where eggs are incubated and hatched to produce young birds such as chickens or ducklings. If the young birds have been bred and hatched to eventually produce eggs for the food chain as mature 'layers', only the female birds will be required. Therefore, these need to be separated from the male chicks.

Birds bred for meat will also be sexed depending on company requirements. To determine the sex of the young birds, care needs to be taken in catching, handling and examining them to ensure they aren't stressed or harmed.

Responsibilities include:

- Handling birds
- Assisting with the selection of birds
- Assisting with preparing birds for transfer.

Egg Collector

An Egg Collector in the poultry industry collects eggs laid by laying hens which are especially reared for this purpose. Ducks, geese and turkeys may also lay eggs for the food chain.

Birds producing hatching eggs are generally kept in controlled environment open housing. It's the role of an Egg Collector to find and collect eggs. Eggs may be sold into the food chain or hatched to produce birds.

With further training and experience, an Egg Collector could gain promotion to a Stockman.

Responsibilities include:

- Maintaining egg production
- Collecting and grading eggs
- Preparing eggs for transport.



Farm Manager

A Farm Manager is responsible for the management of poultry on a farm. This will mean responsibility for health, welfare and the performance of the poultry unit. Monitoring the performance of the poultry unit and production stages is done using computers and automated technology. A Farm Manager will also have some responsibility for staff, such as the Stockman or Assistant Farm Manager.

Responsibilities include:

- Day-to-day running of the farm
- Planning livestock strategies and targets for production
- Negotiating with buyers and suppliers
- Monitoring and managing the feed and water consumption of birds
- Ensuring that veterinary and medicines treatment records are up to date
- Administration, record keeping and budgets
- Quality assurance
- Hygiene and bio-security
- Managing staff.

Agricultural Scientists/Technicians include Geneticists, Nutritionists, Technologists

Responsibilities include:

- Collecting and analysing samples
- Researching animal diseases
- Improving animal feeds
- Research to improve animal breeding
- Producing reports
- Providing advice to farmers.

Further information

Lantra website: lantra.co.uk/careers

Information taken from

- Lantra UK Skills Assessment 2010-2011
- Lantra Model for Employment and Forecasting 2012