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Species sheet – All about laying hens!



The laying hens seem to you to be silly and boring animals? Their cognitive abilities may surprise you!

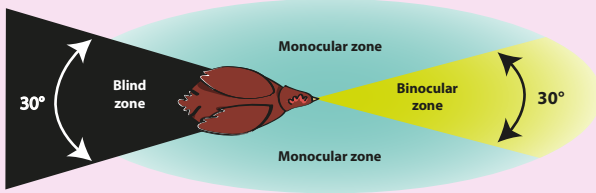
This new species sheet is your chance to learn more about hens. You'll discover that the hen is a social animal with specific behavioral needs and a unique sensory perception of the world! Discover also fun facts about the animal!

This species sheet was produced with the help and proofreading of Laura Warin, Animal Welfare Project Manager at Itavi, and Maryse Guinebrière, Scientific Project Manager for Health/Animal Welfare at Anses.

Sensory capabilities

View

Panoramic field of view (300°)



Hens have poor **night vision**, but during the day they can see **close-up objects** very well (*useful for feeding*).

They see more colors than humans, particularly in the **green** and **blue** spectrums.

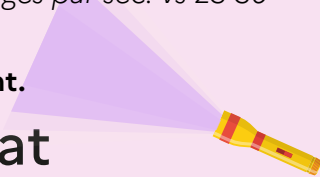
DID YOU KNOW?
Hens can move each eye independently

They detect **movement** very well, enabling them to spot predators (*150-200 images par sec. vs 25-30 images par sec. for humans*).

They can see **ultraviolet light**.

Odorat

Hens' sense of smell is used for **communication** (*conspecific recognition*), **exploration** (*conspecific recognition, search for food*) and also to **spot predators**.



Taste

In hens, **taste is less developed** than in some mammals, but this ability may be underestimated.

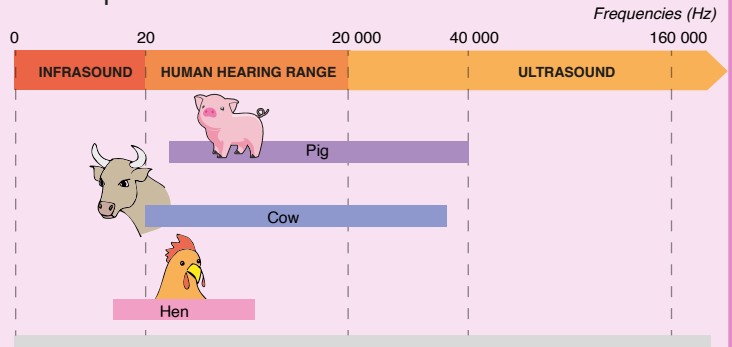
Taste buds are not located on the tongue but in the anterior and posterior regions of the **buccal cavity**.

Unlike mammals, hens only know **4 tastes** (*sour, unami, salt, bitter*) with a high sensitivity to **bitter**.

Hearing

Hens are not very sensitive to **high-pitched sounds**, but more to **low-pitched sounds**.

Hens' auditory system is formed **in the egg** and develops **before other senses**.



Hens can be stressed by **loud noise**.

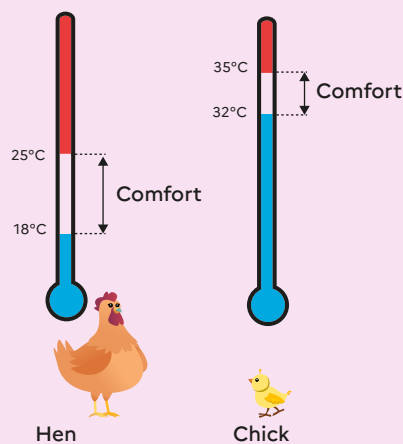
Touch

Sensitivity to touch



Most sensitive area

Thermal sensitivity*



Hens **are sensitive** to touch and their skin contains many types of **receptors** for temperature, pressure and pain.

The hen's beak **is like the human hand**: it enables it to discover and understand its environment, interact with other hens and grasp food.

DID YOU KNOW?
Pain perception in the egg may develop between the 7th and the 15th day of an embryo's life

*The thermal comfort of hens depends on breed, while temperature perception depends on humidity and air speed.