

BROODING CHICKS



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Your success with a farm poultry flock can be measured by the quality of the chicks which make up your flock.

A strong healthy flock depends upon the use of a definite sanitation program.

Attention to small details of flock management often is the difference between profit and loss.

WHAT KIND OF CHICKS

Buy the best chicks. Buy U.S. Approved pullorum controlled chicks, or better. Buy from a hatchery near your home that is operating under the National Poultry Improvement Plan.

Buy the chicks that are popular in your community. In North Dakota, the Leghorn is the preferred light breed. White Plymouth Rocks and New Hampshires are the favorite dual purpose breeds.

HOW MANY CHICKS

How many chicks to raise depends on the time you have available, the size of your buildings and the amount of equipment you have. If you want just enough for family use, buy 50 chicks. If you want a large project, buy a brooder house unit of 250 to 300 chicks.

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WHEN TO GET YOUR CHICKS

If you are planning to have laying pullets, order your chicks for delivery in March and April.

Chicks ordered then will get into production in August and September when egg prices are higher.

Other advantages of early hatched chicks (before April 15) are:

1. Lower death loss due to less disease, particularly coccidiosis.
2. Faster growth than late hatched chicks.
3. Early hatched chicks have a lower laying house mortality than the late hatched pullets.

Generally, early hatched chicks are more profitable than late hatched chicks.

SYSTEMS OF BROODING

The three general types of brooding are the battery system, the hot water system and the colony system.

The colony system is the one used most in North Dakota. Oil, coal, gas and electric brooders are the four kinds.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED TO BROOD 300 CHICKS

- A 12 foot by 12 foot, or 10 foot x 14 foot brooder house.
- Two accurate thermometers.
- A reliable brooder big enough to supply adequate heat and one that will operate satisfactorily under various weather conditions.
- A supply of good litter, such as crushed corn cobs, shavings, chopped straw, peat moss, or other good commercial litter.
- A check guard made of hardware cloth, cardboard, or metal. Guard should be 18 inches high and long enough to completely circle the brooder leaving a 4 foot space between the edge of the hover and the chick guard.
- Suitable water fountains. Six glass jars for the first 3 weeks. Larger fountains will be needed after 3 weeks.
- A good watering stand with a drip pan to catch any water spilled by the chicks and to prevent dampness around the water fountains.
- Six 2 foot hoppers open on both sides for the first 3 or 4 weeks.
- Six growing chick hoppers to be used after 4 weeks.
- A small grit hopper.
- Wire covered roosts to be put in the house when the chicks are 5 weeks old.

THINGS TO DO BEFORE THE CHICKS ARRIVE

- Clean the brooder house.
- Sweep down the ceilings and walls and remove all dirt.
- Wash and disinfect the brooder house thoroughly with a good commercial disinfectant, or use one can of lye to 15 gallons of hot water.
- Move brooder house to clean ground.
- Repair all cracks in walls and floor and replace any broken window panes.
- Set up the brooder in the house and operate it for two days before the chicks arrive. Be sure it holds an even temperature of around 95 degrees 2 inches from the floor at the edge of the hover.
- Place litter on the floor.
- Put the feed hoppers, water fountains and grit hoppers inside the chick guards in the house.
- Have a fresh supply of chick starter on hand so the chicks may be fed as soon as they arrive.
- Round off the corners of the house with building paper, wire netting, hardware cloth, or lumber.

AFTER THE CHICKS ARRIVE

- Remove chicks from boxes and place in brooder. Avoid chilling chicks.
- Feed a good starter mash immediately. Your chicks will be hungry.
- Supply fresh water warm enough not to chill the chicks.
- Watch the chicks to make sure that they are comfortable. Uncomfortable chicks cheep constantly.
- Supply fresh starter each day.
- Keep chick-sized grit in the grit hopper at all times.
- If the weather allows, lower the temperature 3 degrees to 5 degrees each week until chicks no longer need heat.
- Remove chick guards when chicks are about a week old.
- Let chicks out on the sun porch or on good range as soon as weather permits.

VENTILATING THE BROODER HOUSE

A good brooder house has an abundance of fresh air without drafts. Chicks require a source of uniform heat, but an overheated house is not good for growing chicks. Overheating the brooder house will result in slow growing and slow feathering, and will leave the chicks weak and susceptible to disease.

The brooder house should have windows that can be opened to admit direct sunlight whenever the weather permits. g °

SANITATION

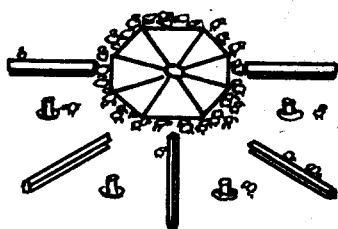
"An ounce of sanitation is worth a ton of cure". Clean sanitary surroundings and equipment will pay large dividends when raising chicks.

Clean the house as often as needed, depending upon the number of chicks in the house, weather, type of litter used, etc.

If your chicks are to be turned out-of-doors, the ground should be clean. Clean ground is ground that has had no poultry on it for two years.

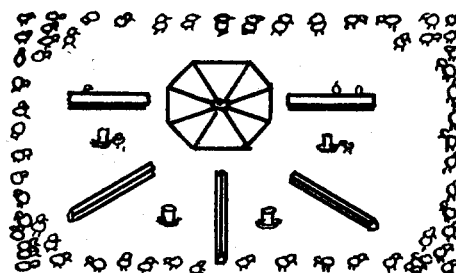
WATCH FOR DISTRESS SIGNS

After a little experience you can tell when your chicks are uncomfortable and when they are just right. Contented chicks are quiet while uncomfortable chicks will cheep all the time.



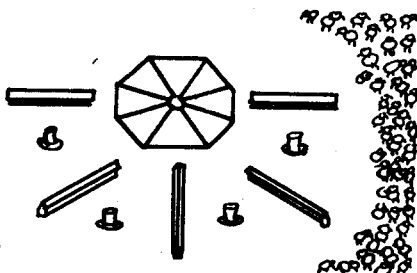
TOO COLD

Chicks crowd up close or under the hover. They won't go out to eat and drink. They cheep all the time. PROVIDE MORE HEAT



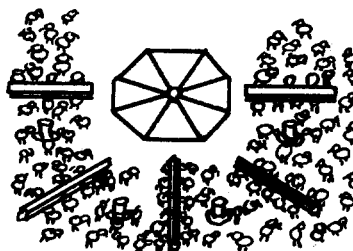
TOO HOT

Chicks crowd away from the edge of the hover to get away from the heat. If they look like this, cool and ventilate the brooder room.



TOO DRAFTY

Chicks crowd into corners when trying to avoid drafts. WHILE THE HOUSE SHOULD HAVE FRESH AIR, ADJUST THE VENTILATION SO AIR DOES NOT BLOW ACROSS THE FLOOR.



JUST RIGHT

Not a peep from the flock. Chicks spread out in a circle around the hover to eat and sleep.