

Care of Baby Poultry

FOOD: Use a chick starter for the first 8 wks. Put the feed in troughs low enough so the chicks can find and reach the feed easily. Never let the chicks run out of feed. After 8 weeks you can use grower feed.

WATER: Have a 1 gallon chick waterer for each 50 chicks. Your chicks will be thirsty when you get them. A taste of water right away helps them to find more water soon. Most baby chick loss is caused because the chick doesn't start to eat or drink. Never let your chicks run out of water.

HEAT: We have found that using a drop light with reflector shield is a great source of heat. Use a 75 - 100 watt bulb and use as many lights as you need to keep the birds comfortable. Hang the light no closer than 18 inches from the floor. If too warm raise light higher. The temperature should be 90-95 degrees for the first week. Reduce the temperature 5 degrees per week until you reach 70 degrees. They shouldn't need much heat after that. The birds need a small light at night to keep them from piling up even when they don't need it for warmth.

SPACE: Try to provide 1/2 square foot per chick at the start. For raising 50 chicks use a draft shield (see below) and make a circle about 5 to 6 foot across. For 100 chicks make a circle 7 to 8 feet across.

Other Important Matters:

DRAFT SHIELD: Cardboard put in a circle about 12 inches high around the chicks helps cut down drafts on the floor. Be sure the circle is large enough to allow the chick to get away from the heat if it wants to.

LITTER: Sawdust, shavings or rice hulls make a good litter. Sand, straw, or dirt will also work but not as good as the others. Put the litter all over the floor at least 1 to 2 inches thick.

REAR END "PASTING UP": Sometimes the stress of shipping causes the manure to stick to the back of the chick. It is important to remove this daily. Pull off gently or, better yet, wash off with a cloth and warm water. It will disappear in a few days as the chick starts to grow. If chicks appear droopy add a sulfa type drug to their drinking water as directed on package.

THE DUCKS AND GEESE SHOULD BE RAISED SEPARATE FROM THE CHICKS AND TURKEYS

Baby Ducks and Geese

Follow the same general instructions as with chicks. With all poultry be careful not to let them get very wet as they will chill and die.

Baby ducks will drown in water if left unattended. They may not be turned out onto ponds until they are fully feathered.