

Bonnie's Chick Hatchery Ltd.

MANAGEMENT GUIDE

Prepare:

- The key to your success is preparation and planning before your chicks arrive. New chicks are "babies". They need all the "tender loving care" you can give them.
- Clean, disinfect and dry the brooding area. Ensure it is warm, draft free, rodent free and inaccessible to wild birds or other predators.

Space:

- Confine chicks to a smaller area. A circular chick guard will define their space, help to keep them warm and will protect them from drafts. Provide approximately ½ sq. ft. per chick and ¾ sq. ft. per turkey poult. Increase pen size after about 1 week.

Bedding:

- Provide clean, dry, mold free bedding of chopped straw to a depth of 3 - 4 inches. Wood shavings are okay but must not be too fine. **Do Not use sawdust!** Avoid cedar shavings as these are toxic to your "babies". The depth of the litter should be increased if the floor of the pen is cold or damp.

Heat Source:

- Provide a heat source, the most common being an infra-red heat lamp, hung at approximately 18" from the floor, to keep them warm. You will need 1 lamp per 50 chicks. We recommend a second lamp as a back-up heat source in case your first lamp fails. Your lamp should be placed and turned on 24 hours prior to arrival of your baby chicks. This will ensure the proper temperature is achieved before your chicks arrive.

Temperature:

- Pre-heat the pen 24 hrs before chicks arrive. Temperature at floor level must be 95° F for the first week, lowering it 5° F per week until 75° F is reached. Placing a high-low thermometer at floor level will help to ensure the correct temperature is achieved.
- **Important:** Chilling commonly affects the heart, legs and growth rate. It is especially critical with White Rock Broilers, Turkeys and birds fed organically. Success will be directly attributed to the comfort and care that you provide.

Water Requirements:

- 1 gallon fountain for every 50 birds. Clean, fresh water should always be available on a "free-choice" basis. Chicks should never run out of water. Special care should be taken to ensure the brooding area does not become wet. Chicks will chill quickly and may result in losses.

Feeders:

- 1 x 24" feeder for every 25 birds. You should have enough feeder space so that all chicks can eat at the same time. This will eliminate the possibility of starve-outs. It will also result in a more uniform flock, and reduce the possibility of stunted growth.

Feed:

- Always provide fresh, high quality starter purchased from a reputable supplier. Your local feed store is your source for feed and supplies. Store feed in a secure area to keep it clean and dry and to prevent contamination.

Pick-up:

- We provide new clean containers for your order. Move your chicks from their pick-up point into a **warm** vehicle as quickly as possible. Allow for ventilation, but avoid drafts. Never place chicks into the open box of a pick-up truck or the trunk of a car. Please plan errands for another time. Chicks that are left unattended in a vehicle will chill down quickly in a cool environment or overheat in a very hot environment.

Upon Arrival and 1st week:

- The brooder should be warmed prior to placement of chicks. Move them promptly into the brooding pen, avoiding drafts. Dip the beak of each chick into lukewarm water before you turn it loose. This will ensure the chicks will not "chill down". This is especially critical for White Rocks.
- **Most baby chick loss is caused because the chick does not start to eat or drink.**

Observe and Monitor:

- After placement of chicks into the brooder, observe the chicks to ensure all of them find food and water and appear comfortable. They must be watched at this age. Chicks can move quickly, squeeze into small spaces, and are helpless against a variety of predators, including the family dog or cat.

Bio-Security: Please visit: www.inspection.gc.ca for detailed recommendations regarding small flock owners.