

State College of Washington  
Method of Feeding and Caring for Chicks in the Brooder  
by  
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The brooders are made ready at least 24 hours before the chicks are to be placed in them. First, they are thoroughly scrubbed and then disinfected. This is done by using a 30% solution of Zenoleum in a hand spray pump. On the floor of the brooder we scatter sand, and over this spread short cut straw to a depth of  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. Under the hover we aim to have the straw about 2 in. deep so the chicks in settling down will not work themselves through to the bare floor. In front of the hover we scatter finely granulated bone, charcoal and bright grit, chick size. The empty brooder is heated to a temperature of 90 degrees. When the chicks are placed in the brooder their heat will quickly bring the temperature up to 95 or 96 degrees, and this temperature should be approximately maintained each night for the first week. After the first week the night temperature should be gradually lowered until by the 4th week only sufficient heat is maintained to give a suggestion of warmth and to keep the brooder thoroughly dry. In the daytime the heat may be held slightly higher, as but few chicks are under the hover at one time. From the 4th week until the chicks are taken from the brooder it is advisable to do with as little artificial heat as will serve to keep the chicks comfortable. In the morning the lamp may be lighted for an hour or two to remove the chill and dampness. This lowering of temperature tends to "harden" the chicks and they stand the removal to colony coops much better than if kept under highly heated hovers.

The chicks are generally 24 hours old when removed from the incubator to the brooder. They are given fresh water immediately.

Generally we dip the bills of a few of the more precocious in the water and they in turn teach the rest to drink. For the next 24 hours nothing else is given them except the grit, charcoal and bone scattered in the straw litter.

The first food given is rolled oats (the household kind) and this is followed with cracked wheat or commercial chick food. We feed at intervals of 2 hours for the first 3 days and thereafter, 4 times per day. For the first 2 days we feed extremely little as our purpose is to teach the chicks to eat, and to give time for the absorbed yolk to become assimilated. For 75 chicks the total amount of feed the first day should not exceed  $\frac{1}{2}$  teacupful at each feeding. Bowel trouble appearing from the 4th to the 10th day is very often due to overfeeding the first two days.

Beginning with the 7th day we add to the ration a dry mash composed of 10 lbs. bran, 1 lb. sifted beef scrap, and 1 lb. bone meal. This is left before the chicks for a period of 2 hours per day. When hard boiled, infertile eggs are available we use one ground and rubbed through 1 lb. of the mash for every 50 chicks.

From the 2nd day on, sour milk is before the chicks all the time. The milk containers are kept scrupulously clean.

Beginning about the 28th day we gradually change from rolled oats and chick food to sprouted oats and developing foci. Sprouted oats are fed sparingly at first and are never fed more than once per day and then only what will be eaten up clean in 15 minutes.

About the 5th week we gradually make whole wheat a part of the ration, being guided largely by the chicks' preference for whole or cracked grains.

From the age of 2 weeks we use dry mash made of 10 lbs. bran, 3 lbs. corn meal, 1 lb. each of ground bone and sifted beef scrap or fish meal. We occasionally vary this by mixing it to a crumbly consistency with sweet skimmed milk.

Finely cut plawn clippings are fed liberally every day.