



Feed your Flocks

Seasonal Tips

Spring 2017

Brooding Basics

Brooders for baby chicks are quite simple. For the most part they only include five things. Some kind of container to contain the chicks, bedding, a water source, a feed source, and a heat source. The container can be just about anything that is elongated, with high sides (18-24") to contain the chicks. Sides lower than 18" will allow the baby chicks to "escape" as they learn to fly, by flying on top of the feeder or waterer first, and then flying over the edge of the brooder, and then of course onto the floor. This can be solved regardless of the height of your brooder by laying netting, hardware cloth or fencing over the brooder. Some examples of brooders include Rubbermaid bins, plastic or metal water troughs, and even commercial brooder boxes specifically designed for brooding baby chicks.

Bedding

Bedding needs to be soft and absorbent. Pine wood shavings are recommended, but aspen shavings can also be used. Stay away from newspaper, sand, and cedar shavings for the health of the chicks. Your eyes and nose will tell you when the shavings need to be changed. Be aware the ammonia odor will be worse for the baby chicks than you because they are just an inch or two from the shavings. Ammonia can cause health problems for the chicks if shavings are not kept clean and dry.



Watering

Waterers need to be filled at least once a day with cool clean water. Keep the waterers as far away from the heat source as possible. Placing marbles in the waterer base will not only attract the chicks to the waterer, but will help prevent the chicks from drowning, and becoming wet from walking in the water. Keeping the shavings out of the waterer can be challenging to say the least. Hanging the waterer can help, but this option is not always feasible. Placing the waterer on a block can help, but shavings will still find their way into the waterer. A cheap simple solution is to use a product called Brooder Bottle Cap. It's a nipple style waterer that can be attached to a standard two-liter soda bottle you hang from the side of the brooder. No more shaving in the waterer, period!

Feeding

Chicks need access to chick starter feed at all time. Keep feed in their feeders always. They will not over-eat. Most choose to feed medicated chick starter to help prevent Coccidiosis, but non-medicated chick starter is also available if you and your customers prefer that option. The medication in chick starter is not an antibiotic. This is a big misconception many people have.



Heating

Lastly, the baby chicks do require a heat source. Many of you probably use a heat lamp you clamp to the side of the brooder. Unfortunately, these cause hundreds of fires every year in both homes and stores. Safer heaters are available that are specifically designed for chick brooders like the Brinsea EcoGlo and Sweeter Heater. If you choose to use heat lamps, please implement several fail-safe measures to ensure they do not fall into the dry shavings below and start a fire. Options include duct tape, additional clamps, and hooks and chains. Bulbs have also been known to fall out of the lamps, so I recommend wrapping hardware cloth around the lamp to prevent this from happening.

I hope you have a very successful Chick Days event, and I look forward to sharing some summer tips with you soon!

Power to the Poultry,

Andy Schneider, aka The Chicken Whisperer



Spotlight

By: Dr. Nancy Jefferson

They're Here! Feeding your chickens

Peep, peep. Spring always brings a much-needed feeling of renewal and growth. Whether you are starting a new flock or hoping to add some youth to an existing flock, spring is the perfect opportunity to get some new chicks. Picking an appropriate feed is an important step in assuring that your new chicks get off to a good START. That's right, new chicks need a complete starter feed to grow healthy and strong. If you are raising chicks that will become laying hens, start with a high protein complete starter feed like Kalmbach 20% All-Natural Flock Starter-Grower (Product Code 1044). This feed contains all of the nutrients that chicks need to grow well, make their feathers, and develop their immune system.

If you are raising meat birds, choose the highest protein complete starter feed to help those birds grow efficiently and develop muscle tissue. Kalmbach Feeds has great options for meat birds because we designed our feeds for easy feeding – one feed used for the entire growth cycle. Kalmbach 22% All Natural Broiler Start-to-Finish (Product Code 1039CR) is designed to meet all of the nutrient needs of your meat birds from Day 1 to market weight.

The entire line of Kalmbach starter feeds contain a mix of probiotics and prebiotics to help support digestive and immune health for your new chicks. Kalmbach Feeds is here to help answer all of your poultry-related questions. <http://feedyourflocks.com>; www.kalmbachfeeds.com