

Safe Handling: Cleanliness and safe handling should be a priority and a common thread throughout all your practices. Micro-organisms are ever present in both oral and fecal matter of animals. Care must be taken to prevent the transmission to people. **Always, wash your hands with soap and warm water after handling your pets or livestock.**

Inspect your order immediately when you pick it up. If there is a loss, complete the [Declaration of Poultry Condition Upon Pickup](#) found on the backside of this form and send it to us within 3 days. If possible take pictures as well.

Arrival Day: As tempting as it is to handle your chicks, it is best to keep handling to a minimum and refrain from playing with the chicks. Get the chicks to their new brooder as soon as possible. While chicks should be given water immediately, see notes below regarding warm water to help avoid problems.

Brooder: A sufficiently sized cardboard box works well for a brooder and provides an effective draft shield. Cool drafts are bad for chicks, causing chills and huddling which leads to suffocation, and possible respiratory problems. However, keep in mind chicks do need plenty of fresh air – just not cool drafty air. A heat source, preferably heat lamps or light bulbs, capable of maintaining 90-95 degrees in the brooding area is essential. We suggest you turn these on and test them in advance, taking your current weather conditions into consideration. Regularly check the temperature using a thermometer at the chick level, 2-3 inches above the floor. There are 250 watt heat-lamps designed and recommended for this purpose; be very careful using these products as they can get very hot. Your brooder also needs sufficient space to allow chicks to move away from the heat source. As the chicks grow, decrease the brooder temperature by 5 degrees each week until you reach 70 degrees or the chicks are totally feathered. At this time the chicks don't need a heat source. A single 250 watt heat lamp is generally sufficient for approximately 100 chicks. You can raise and lower the lamp to adjust the chick level temperature.

Water: The water should be warmed to approximately 98° and be immediately available to your new chicks. The warm water is to prevent the thirsty chicks from cooling themselves too quickly when they drink which can lead to shock and ultimately death. If the chicks are cold they may need to warm before they will begin to drink. You can also give each chick a quick dip of their beak into the water to help them learn where and what it is – do not hold the beak in the water or force them to drink. For the first 8 hours you may add 1 tablespoon of sugar to each quart of water. This will also help stimulate the chicks. Allow the chicks access to water for at least an hour before introducing any food.

Bedding: Some form of bedding or litter should be put down to cover the entire brooding area to a depth of 1-2 inches. Some good material to use would be wood chips or peat moss. Never use cedar shavings which can be toxic to chicks or sawdust which can cause impaction when eaten. Use of either of these materials can result in death. Remember, little chicks will pick at everything! Many folks are inclined to use paper material – we DO NOT recommend its use. Any slick surface material could cause the chicks to slip resulting in spraddled legs – legs sprawling out from under the chick. The resulting joint injury from spraddled legs if not immediately corrected is irreversible.

Feed: An 18% protein chick starter crumbles from your local feed store should be given after the chicks have had their first hour of access to water. We recommend spreading the food on a paper towel on the floor of the brooder for the first 24 hours. This stimulates the chicks to eat. Introduce them to the feeder later. When feeding, allow for sufficient space that all can feed without crowding. Crowding at the feed or water area creates stress which may lead to pecking at each other. The chicks should have food and water available to them at all times.

Stress: If your chicks are overly stressed upon arrival you may add sugar (1 tablespoon per quart) to their initial watering before giving food. Use fresh water after this initial dosage. If you want to provide additional vitamins and/or electrolytes do so after allowing a couple days of fresh water. Whatever vitamins or stress pack you choose, always follow the manufacturer's directions for use. Watch for a condition referred to as "pasty butt" or "pasting up". Stressed chicks may have diarrhea or very sticky (pasty) stools which will stick to the chicks. The result is a blocked rectum. Remove this manure daily by pulling it off gently or better yet is to wash it off with warm water and a cloth. This condition should clear as the chicks grow and begin to eat the chick starter. If the chicks also appear droopy you may use a sulfa (antimicrobial) type drug following the manufacturer's directions.

Sanitation: The chicks will get food into the waterers which will sour very quickly under the warm brooder conditions. Algae may also become a problem. In either case the waterers become prime breeding ground for bacteria and in turn can cause chick sickness. The feeders and litter will also need to be cleaned and replaced as needed to maintain a sanitary environment for healthy chicks.

Domestic Pets and Predators: Don't overlook your loveable family dogs and cats. Just as you will want to protect the chicks from wild predators don't forget about your domestic pets. Easily accessible chicks have a way of bringing out the hunting instinct in animals.

Watch for Picking: Chicks will often pick at each other for any of a number of reasons: too crowded, too hot or short of fresh air. After checking brooder conditions, you might try adding some grass clippings to give the chicks something else at which to pick. When feathers begin to appear they will contain blood. The loss of a feather may cause a bloody spot at which other chicks will pick, making it necessary to isolate such spotted chicks. 24 hours under lights may also cause picking. You might try reducing the lighting around noon being careful to not let them get too cold. As evening approaches the chicks will lay down across each other you do not want them stacked 2-3 deep as they will smother each other. Turn the lights back on before the chicks are chilled.

Turkeys and peafowl tend to be more difficult to get started. Follow the chick instructions above and we recommend that medicated turkey rations be used, if you are unable to find turkey feed blends you may use chick rations. Turkeys sometimes have a difficult time finding their food and water. You may place some brightly colored marbles in the base of the waterer to attract their attention or consider placing a few chicks with them. These chicks will help teach the newly arrived turkeys by leading them to the food and water. The chicks should be removed after a few days. Turkeys and chickens should not be raised together. Turkeys can pick up "black head" from the droppings of older chickens - there is no cure and death is most certain.

Ducklings and Goslings will require more care than chicks, they are simply messier. Their messier behavior is also why you should not raise them with other fowl. The others can get sick and die. However, due to the ducklings and goslings rapid growth, they will not require heat as long and will be able to be turned out sooner than chicks. Contrary to common belief, do not let ducklings and goslings out on a pond or other body of water - they will drown. Wait until they are feathered out. You will need heavier and sturdier waterers to keep them from being spilled onto the litter. Never let water fowl run out of water they run a choking risk when eating as they wash their food down with water. Also, never medicate the water for ducklings and goslings Both ducklings and goslings should be watered (NO sugar or medication) immediately on arrival. However, you should restrict their intake for the first couple of hours. Let them have a few drinks then take the water up for 30 minutes and repeat. Too much water too early can lead to shock and death.

Declaration of Poultry Condition Upon Pick Up

Pick Up Information			ORDER NBR:		
Date	Time	Location	Outside Temperature		
Shipment Condition					
<i>Describe the condition of the box and packaging materials:</i>					
<i>Describe the condition of your poultry. Include counts for both live and deceased animals:</i>					
Breed Description	Live	Dead	Breed Description	Live	Dead
1.			6.		
2.			7.		
3.			8.		
4.			9.		
5.			10.		
I certify that all information furnished on this form is accurate, truthful and may be used to file an insurance claim. I further understand that false or misleading information on this form may subject me to criminal and/or civil penalties.					
Receiver's Signature:					
signature		Date		Phone	

If you experience a loss:

Complete our Declaration of Poultry Condition Upon Pick Up.

Obtain postal stamp from clerk →

If possible take pictures of the packaging and contents. Pictures available: Yes No

Return this form to us within 3 days. You may call but we will still need a completed form.

