

# THE CARE OF BABY CHICKS

**FEED:** Use a commercial medicated chick starter for the first 8 weeks. Cover the litter with newspapers for only 3 days, changing papers daily. Sprinkle feed on top of the papers and have your baby chick feeders full also. (Use a 2 foot feeder for each 25 chicks). After 3 days remove the newspapers.

**WATER:** Have a 1 gallon chick waterer for each 50 birds. For the first 2 days add 3 tablespoons of table sugar to each quart of water for extra energy. Use plain water after that. **DIP THE BEAK OF THE CHICK IN THE WATER BEFORE YOU TURN IT LOOSE.** Your birds will be thirsty when you get them. A taste of water right away helps them to find more water soon. Most baby bird loss is because the bird doesn't start to eat or drink. Never let your bird run out of water.

**HEAT:** The temperature where the birds are should be 90 to 95 degrees for the first week. Reduce the temperature 5 degrees per week until you get to 70 degrees. Then they shouldn't need anymore heat.

A good source of heat is a 250 watt heat bulb. (Red bulbs are better than white.) Hang it 18 inches from the floor. The temperature directly under the bulb will be higher than 90 degrees but the birds will adjust themselves to the area they like. Use 1 bulb for each 50 chicks in cold weather.

**LIGHT:** If you use a heat bulb, this will also serve as the light you need. Otherwise, be sure to give your birds light. Use a 75 watt bulb on dark days. Have a small light for night - 15 watts or similar - to keep them from piling.

**SPACE:** Try to provide ½ square foot per bird at the start. For starting 50 chicks use a draft shield (see below) and make a circle about 5 to 6 feet across.

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

**LITTER:** Sawdust, shavings, or ground corn cobs make good litter. Sand, straw or dirt will also work but are not as good as the others. Put the litter all over the floor at least 1 inch thick. Keep it covered for the first 3 days with newspaper to keep the chicks from eating the litter instead of the feed. It is important to remove the papers after 3 days.

## After Four Weeks

1. Increase floor area to 3/4 square foot per bird.
2. Increase feeders to provide 2 ½" to 3" of space per bird.
3. Increase waterers to one 5-gallon fount per 100 birds.
4. Install roosts at back of brooder area. Allow four-inches per bird with roost poles six inches apart.
5. Open windows in day-time. Leave only partly open at night.
6. Prevent water puddles around founts. Place founts on low wire platforms.
7. Birds can range outside on warm sunny days, but not only if clean range is available.