

4-H Chick Chain Poultry Project

Now That You Have Your Chicks

Nicole Marrero • 931-823-2735 • nmarrero@utk.edu • Overton County

Today's the Day

Today you received your chicks. For the next 20 weeks, they will be your responsibility. How well you do at the County show and sale will depend entirely on how well you take care of your birds.

Best Management Practices

Here is a review of what you need to know.

Warmth

Be sure the birds are kept warm. The temperature of the brooding area should be around 95 degrees to start and then lowered by 5 degrees each week until no longer needed.

Water

Give the baby chicks 8% sugar water to drink for the first day: 1 ½ cups in a gallon. Keep the water clean with fresh water provided daily. Place waterers on wired platforms so the birds aren't on wet litter.

Feed

Use a commercial chick starter for the first 6 weeks, then change to a commercial chick grower for the rest of the growing period. You should expect to feed a total of about 4 pounds of starter to each chick, and later a total of about 16 pounds of grower to each pullet. Be sure chicks have fresh feed in front of them at all times. However, do not let the feed go to waste.

Always put feed in a feeder.



Pay Attention to Your Birds

Watch the chicks very closely the first day or 2. Don't mix the birds with other flocks

Feeding

Don't feed your birds the wrong feed. It is the **MOST COMMON MISTAKE**.

- Do not give your chickens scratch grain or table scraps.
- Do not mix a complete ration with scratch grains.
- Why shouldn't you feed them scratch grains?
 - They **DO NOT** grow as well.
 - They are **LESS RESISTANT** to disease.
 - They will pick at their feathers.
 - Feather picking leads to **cannibalism**: they will eat each other.

Feeding scratch grains DOES NOT save money.

Birds fed scratch grains will not lay as many eggs as birds that are fed a well-balanced, complete feed.

The **second most common mistake** is not feeding enough. A flock of 15 birds will need about this much feed:

- **0-6 weeks:** 50 lbs. of starter
- **6-20 weeks:** 200 lbs. of grower
- **Layers:** 50 lbs. of layer feed every 2 weeks.

Remember

70% of the cost of raising chickens is due to feed. This is an investment, not an expense. The better the birds are fed, the greater the return on the eggs.

Please contact your County Agent if you have questions.