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EC1456 Questions and Answers on Brooding and Feeding Chicks

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1. What is efficient brooding?

A. Providing at reasonable costs a suitable and comfortable environment for the development of chicks from hatching time until they can do without heat.

2. What are the essentials of a good brooder house?

A. (1) Weather proof—keep out the rain, wind and cold. (2) Retain the heat or prevent heat leaking out too rapdly. (3) Be well and evenly lighted with windows arranged so that direct sunshine may enter. (4) Built, arranged, and equipped to save labor and maintain sanitation.

3. What size and type of brooder house is best suited for the average farm?

A. The 10′ x 12′ colony brooder house with sun parlor has proven highly satisfactory. It will accommodate 300 chicks, the number necessary for adding 100 pullets each year to the average farm flock of 150 hens.

4. Why are movable brooder houses recommended?

A. Movable houses permit the use of clean, fresh ground that is free of disease contamination. Worm infestation, low vitality, and much of the death loss is due to the use of ground chickens have run over year after year.

5. Is it advisable to build a double floor in brooder houses?

A. Double floors are recommended for early broods or when early broilers are produced. A more unifrom temperature can be maintained in cold weather at a lower fuel cost.

6. What is the value of insulation in a brooder house?

A. Insulation may be compared to the double floor. It prevents heat leaking out of the house, thus it saves fuel and insures more uniform temperature.

7. Why are sun parlors so highly praised and widely used?

A. Points in favor of the sun parlor are: (1) It economically enlarges the brooder house. (2) Chicks are permitted to get away from the heat and exercise in cool air. (3) Direct sunshine is made accessible. (4) Chicks are kept off the ground and the danger of coccidiosis or other diseases lessened. (5) Sun parlors make brooding more successful.

8 . To what extent may hardware cloth be used in brooder houses?

A. As feed and water platforms only.

9. Why not for the whole floor area?

A. (1) Hardware cloth floors make drafts more difficult to control. (2) They encourage cannibalism. (3) Cleaning is equally, if not, more difficult. (4) Floors of hardware cloth cannot be walked upon by caretaker.

10. In addition to the house what is required in the way of brooding equipment?

A. Efficient, labor saving sanitary feeders and waterers, and the brooder stove.

11. How much feeding space should be provided?

A. Half to two-thirds of the chicks should be able to eat at once. This would require about 12 feet of feeder space per 100 chicks. One-third of the chicks should be able to drink at once.

12. What type of brooder is best adapted to colony house use—Electric, kerosene, or hard coal?

A. Electricity is probably more nearly fool-proof and uniform but it is also more expensive and requires a well insulated house. Not recommended for movable houses or early brooding without auxiliary heat.

Kerosene burning brooders of the drum type equipped with a chimney for removing the poisonous fumes and an overflow pipe to lessen the fire hazard are proving quite satisfactory. These are less expensive than electric brooders but more expensive than hard coal burning brooders.

Hard coal brooders are less expensive to operate but probably more difficult to regulate and maintain uniform temperature, particularly in windy weather.

13. How much space do chicks require in a brooder house?

A. Two chicks per square foot of floor space has proven most satisfactory.

14. How many chicks should be brooded in a unit?

A. Over 300 chicks in a brood generally require an experienced poultryman. Many farm poultry raisers who try brooding large broods have heavy losses.

15. What kind of litter is best in the brooder house, straw, chopped alfalfa, sand, peat moss, or shavings?

A. Profitable brooding is a matter of lowering the costs. For this reason, farm flock owners are encouraged to use material available on the farm such as fine, clean straw or chopped hay. Peat moss is good but the price makes its use expensive. Clean sand, if available, is good provided the chicks are fed as soon as they are put into the brooder house.

16. What is the proper temperature for brooding chicks?

A. A temperature of 95° F. at the outer edge of the hover and about two inches above the floor is recommended at first. This may be reduced at the rate of five degrees per week.

17. How long is it necessary to provide heat for chicks?

A. The average March and April chicks can do without heat at six weeks of age. Earlier hatched chicks may require heat for a longer period. The object is to keep the chicks comfortable so as the weather must be taken into account. Frequently, too much heat is provided.

18. At what age are chicks taught to roost?

A. Successful poultry raisers advise putting in roosts at the end of the first week.

19. What kind of roosts are used and how are they installed?

A. Slanting roosts supported with diagonally cut boards over which half inch mesh netting is first tacked. The roosts may be of any light strips spaced about four inches apart.

20. At what age are chicks given their first feed?

A. At about 36 hours of age or just as soon as they are put into the brooder.

21. What are they fed?

A. Dry mash containing the essential ingredients for health and rapid growth.

22. What are these ingredients?

A. Home grown feeds supplemented with protein concentrates. (Ground corn and oats, wheat, bran and shorts and alfalfa meal

mixed with a small amount of dried milk and meat and bone meal.)

23. What is a good tested ration for chicks?

A. Experiment Station Chick Mash Mixture No. 4-F

		With skim meal
Yellow cornmeal	360 pounds	460 pounds
Shorts or ground wheat	200	200
Bran	100	100
Pulverized oats	100	100
Alfalfa meal (from best quality hay)	80	80
Meat meal (60% protein)	100	50
Dried buttermilk	50	0
Salt	10	10
	1000 pounds	1000 pounds

1. For early season use add one per cent of good grade cod liver oil to Mash 4-F.
2. Expose chicks to direct sunshine whenever possible without chilling chicks. Cod liver oil is after all only a substitute.
3. Feed green feed (alfalfa, clover, lettuce, lawn clippings, etc.) cut in short lengths when available.
4. Mash mixture 4-F is also recommended for starting poults.

24. What rate of growth can be expected from this ration as compared with the best ready mixed feeds?

A. Equal to any, not to mention the material reduction in the cost of raising chickens.

25. How are chicks fed, all mash or some mash and some grains?

A. For the first three or four weeks they may be given all mash. Scratch grain of equal parts by weight of cracked corn and wheat may be fed at four weeks. Feed one part scratch and two parts mash.

26. How much feeder space is required for chicks?

A. One inch per chick.

27. What feeding precautions are necessary to avoid trouble and disappointment?

A. Constant use of clean, filth proof feeders, and waterers placed upon wire covered platforms large enough to comfortably accommodate the chicks.

28. (1) Approximately how much feed is required to produce a two pound broiler? (2) A three pound fryer? (3) A Leghorn Pullet? (4) A heavy breed pullet?

A. (1) Six pounds. (2) Thirteen pounds. (3) Twenty-four pounds. (4) Twenty-eight pounds.

29. At what age should broilers attain weight of two pounds?

A. Eight to ten weeks. One pound per month is a good rate of growth and can be had from two months of age to maturity.

30. How much does the cost of feed affect the cost of raising pullets?

A. Each additional dollar per hundred weight added to the cost of feed adds 30 cents to the cost of raising a Leghorn pullet to production age and 41 cents to the cost of a heavy breed pullet. (Using the cost of the suggested ration as a base.)

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