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## EC1462 Brooding Chicks in Large Units

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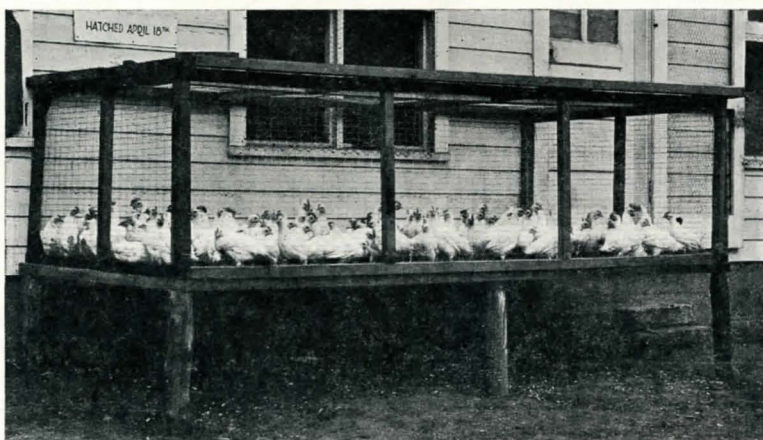
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Extension Circular 1462

July, 1931

## Brooding Chicks in Large Units



Sun porches with hardware cloth floors allow chicks to get outdoors into direct sunshine.

The University of Nebraska Agricultural College Extension Service  
and United State Department of Agriculture Cooperating  
W. H. Brokaw, Director, Lincoln

# Brooding Chicks in Large Units

By J. H. CLAYBAUGH

Commercial poultrymen have been quite successful when brooding units of 500 to 800 chicks. The regular sections of the laying house or rooms 20 by 20 feet in size are converted into chick brooding apartments. Because of the economy of fuel, labor, and equipment, this system combined with the starting of chicks in battery brooders appeals to the poultryman who studies his cost account figures. A brief description of this method of brooding chicks with the necessary equipment seems advisable.

To convert a room that is 20 by 20 feet in size into a brooding space you proceed as follows. A partition, either permanent or movable, is placed from the middle of the north wall to the center post. A twelve inch board placed from the center of the room to the middle of the west wall divides the northwest corner of the building into a room 10 feet square. Sometimes a curtain is hung from the ceiling to meet this board and thus makes the brooding section darker and more easily heated. The brooder stove is placed near the center of this 10 by 10 foot section. The chicks are confined to this heated section during the first few days. The heated section is used as the roosting quarters at night as long as uniform heat temperatures are demanded. The board serving as the

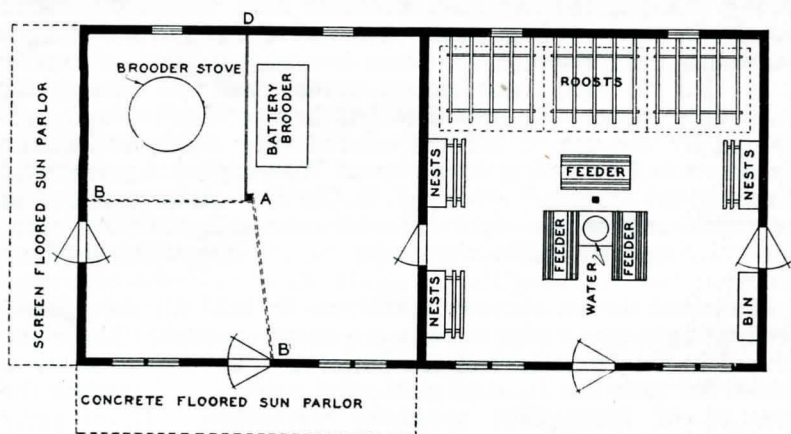


Fig. 1.—Floor plan of 20x40 laying house with one room converted into a brooding room. A, D represents a permanent or a temporary partition in center of room. A, B represents a movable panel to hold chicks to the breeding area. It is 1 to 2 feet high and 10 feet long.



panel that confines the chicks to the heated section is easily moved to allow the chicks free access to the front part of the entire floor of the room.

Training roosts are placed back of the brooder stove to encourage the chicks to learn to roost at an early age. Training roosts are often built on a slope to avoid corners. Wire netting or hardware cloth with at least a half inch mesh is placed beneath the roosts. Such wire may prevent smothering from piling and is a good sanitary precaution.

The use of rather dim artificial lights in the front part of the building has proven a help in decreasing losses from night

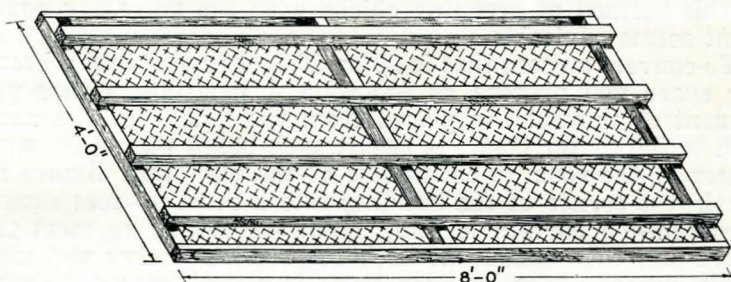


Fig. 2.—Roosts can be nailed on to wire covered frames. When placed in a slanting position around one edge of the building, chicks soon learn to use them. Preventing chicks access to their own droppings is considered good management.

piling. Night feeding also increases feed consumption and results in more rapid growth. The use of a ruby colored light bulb has been adopted by some because the red or bloody part of a victim of cannibalism cannot easily be seen under such light rays. "Cannibalism has been controlled and prevented by the use of natural colored ruby lights in battery brooders and fattening batteries at Washington Agricultural Experiment Station," reports J. S. Carver. After conducting an experiment where eight different colored lights were used, the ruby colored lights were adopted for use when lighting chicks.

Sufficient screen covered platforms to hold all the needed feed troughs and water vessels are recommended. These are placed in the front part of the building. As no floor litter is needed beneath the feeding platforms, their use decreases the amount of litter that needs be purchased. If properly arranged, they can be elevated with a minimum amount of labor while the floor is being cleaned.

The necessity of getting chicks out into direct sunshine is well realized. The hazard of brooding chicks around the

main yards must also be considered. To provide the direct sunshine and to avoid the filth borne diseases, it is necessary to build sun parlors and sun porches. A cement slab at least four feet wide along the south side of the house is recom-

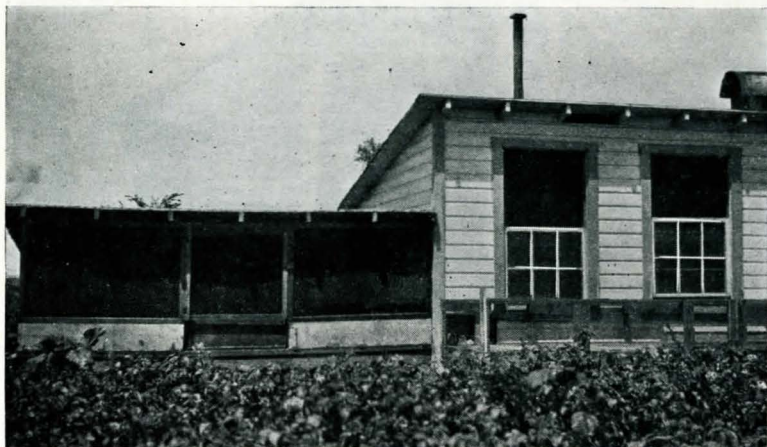


Fig. 3.—Narrow, open front, sheds attached to the ends of poultry houses provide direct sunshine for hens or chicks.

mended. The ordinary movable sun parlors can be placed on this cement. A sun porch that is wire covered and having a hardware cloth floor is also highly recommended by some commercial poultrymen. These sun porches can be built along the southeast or west end of the building. A shed roof type of shelter shed or any open front shed can be placed at the end of such a building and used as an additional sun room for growing chicks.

Several operators have been very successful in the use of battery brooders for the starting of chicks. When chicks are started in the battery brooders from two to three weeks time can be saved between the time one brood is removed from the house and a second brood started. If the first brood is to be sold for broilers or moved to summer range when they are ten weeks old, then the second brood can be started in the battery when the first brood is 7 or 8 weeks old.

It is good management for the poultryman with 800-1000 hens to keep equipment working throughout the year. Usually he fills his houses to capacity with pullets during August and September or October. By February or March enough pullets have been culled so that at least one room of the laying house can be emptied and converted into a brooder



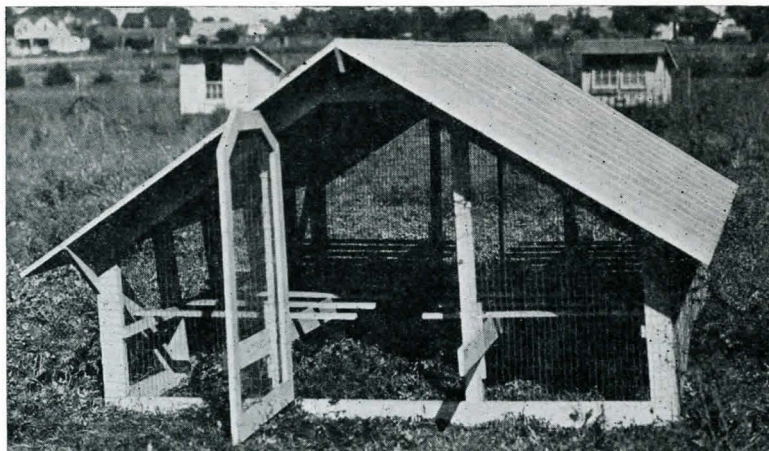


Fig. 4.—Summer shelter sheds are necessary equipment when pullets are moved to clean range.

room. The use of a 20 x 40 size house for this dual purpose will help to relieve the fire hazard of placing a brooder stove in the longer laying house. With this system the chicks can be kept confined to these quarters as described until the pullets are ten weeks of age, or old enough to be moved out onto clean range and into the summer shelter sheds. A second room can usually be made available where the cockerels can be separated from the pullets and held until they are ready to be sold as broilers. Where two or three broods of chicks are so started, the pullets from the last brood are ready for the summer range houses about the time the pullets from the earliest brood are beginning to show sex development and thus need to be brought back and placed in their laying quarters.