

1-1949

EC1494 How to Judge Values of Baby Chicks

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist>

"EC1494 How to Judge Values of Baby Chicks" (1949). *Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension*. 2619.
<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist/2619>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Extension at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

January 1949

Nebraska

E. C. 1494

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK
IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS

U. of N. Agr. College & U. S. Dept. of Agr. Cooperating
H. G. Gould, Acting Director, Lincoln

HOW TO JUDGE VALUES OF BABY CHICKS

Good chicks may be defined as those which will live and grow into the kind of a market chicken or laying pullet which makes the profit needed for the grower to stay in business. The appearance of baby chicks gives the buyer little information regarding their true value. There are several points that should be considered before placing an order for baby chicks.

1. For chicks to live and grow they must be healthy. Obviously one should start with healthy chicks. Only in recent years have midwestern hatcheries been able to reduce the incident of pullorum infection in the breeding flocks to the low point where serious pullorum losses seldom occur, during the first three weeks of brooding. To avoid losses from pullorum, chick buyers can consider the livability records of chicks from different hatcheries. The reputation of a hatchery for putting out chicks that live is thus of great importance. Hatcheries that operate under the National Poultry Improvement Plan are classified as to their pullorum ratings. The definition of these ratings allow 3 percent, 2 percent, or no reactors in the qualifying tests of the breeding flocks. The pathologist agrees that as long as any pullorum is left in any of the breeding flocks furnishing eggs to a hatchery, there remains the possibilities of varying degrees of losses from pullorum among the chicks produced. Therefore, chick buyers can consider both pullorum ratings as well as reputation of the hatchery when deciding where chicks can be secured that are nearly free of pullorum.

During recent years some chick buyers have had severe losses from infectious bronchitis and Newcastle disease. Many chicks that have been started in battery brooders or chicks that were shipped by trains have become infected. To avoid such losses some hatcherymen have truck delivery service direct to the brooder houses. Buying chicks from nearby hatcheries to reduce the time and distance between the incubators and brooder houses now is preferred by careful chick buyers.

2. The breeding of the parent flock is an important factor in the quality of the market poultry and quantity of the eggs produced. The Maine Production and Broiler Test reports that during 350 days the pullets bred for the production of market poultry laid an average of 177 eggs for each pullet entered. The average weight of the cockerels was 3.0 pounds at 10 weeks and 4.7 pounds at 14 weeks. The pullets had an average weight of 2.5 pounds at 10 weeks and 3.7 pounds at 14 weeks. The livability of the chicks at 14 weeks was 96.7 percent. Under such conditions one pound of weight increase could be gained for each 3.6 pounds of feed consumed. Such records should convince most people that it is possible to get a profitable rate of egg production from hens that are bred to produce the fast growing broiler. In deciding where the chick order is to be placed, the buyer should compare the results secured from past purchases and the results reported by friends and neighbors.

The economic use of feed in producing market eggs has long been well advertised by the White Leghorn breeders. The results of egg laying tests have been used to popularize certain strains. This is the reason that many commercial egg producers and hatcherymen specialize with strains which they favor. It is not difficult for one who is developing a commercial egg farm to become acquainted with successful operators who will share their experiences.

3. In the production of satisfactory chicks, the selection, feeding, and management of the breeding flocks is often more important than the breeding. The cooperation of the flock owner with the hatcheryman is an important factor in producing chicks. Chick buyers have many ways of finding the relationships that exist between flock owner and a local hatcheryman. The number of years that satisfactory experiences have existed can be considered. The type of services maintained for flock owners and how well they recommend both the chicks and services are powerful factors affecting the reputation of the local hatcheryman. The information gained from an attractive catalogue may be of less value to an experienced chick buyer than the reputation of a nearby hatchery.

4. So many people report sad experiences in buying bargain chicks that distress chicks are in bad repute. This may account for the exceedingly great pressure that is sometimes used to sell surplus chicks. One type of early season discount on orders placed before eggs are set is so reasonable that more people might consider it. Since such orders enable the hatchery to start the incubators ahead of the rush season and reduces the risk of having unsold chicks on hand, such early season discounts can often be considered a fair way of sharing a reduced risk between the hatcheryman and the chick grower.

5. Chick buyers who are able to visit and observe the operations within the hatchery as well as to know something about the breeding flocks that supply the eggs for hatching have a decided advantage. Since this personal investigation is impossible for most buyers they must depend upon reputations and advertising. Some hatcheries are operated under a supervised program and ratings are determined by regulations as well as the inspections of disinterested people. The National Poultry Improvement Plan has established well defined grades for breed improvement as well as pullorum eradication programs. The careful chick buyer who understands that these definitions are the different grades of chicks, is better able to compare advertisements and to judge values. See Miscellaneous Publication 300.

6. The physical condition of baby chicks are judged by considering the following factors:

Vigor is reflected in a full, bright eye, plump well filled intensively pigmented shanks and beak, long downy fluff-not sticky. A well healed navel indicates good absorption of yolk. One hundred chicks should weigh 8 pounds or more at 24 hours of age. Lighter weights or variations in size indicates that some undersized eggs have been set or a poor job of sorting has been done. A good hatchery manager usually has all cripples and deformed birds sorted out before chicks are delivered.