

BROODING AND FEEDING BABY CHICKS

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Recent Improvements in the Method of Handling Baby Chicks Permit the Poultryman to Brood Larger Flocks With a Decreasing Percent of Mortality

HERE is no phase of the poultry business that has improved more rapidly than that of caring for, and feeding of, the baby chick. Where five years ago it was considered some what of a hazardous proposition to brood 500 chicks in one lot, now it is a common practice with commercial poultrymen to brood 1,000 to 2,000 in one lot in order to cut down the over head cost. The percent loss now in the lots of 2,000 is no greater than they were five years ago in the 500 chick lots. This improvement has come about through the better knowledge and application of the requirements for the best development of baby chicks.

There are two distinct methods of brooding chicks. Both of which prove successful when properly operated. The first and most common method is to heat the air about the chick. This is usually done with a stove, either coal or kerosene, over which is hung a canopy of tin in order to deflect the heat down to the chicks on the floor. The second method is by heating the floor under the chicks. This method is in common use among the successful poultrymen in the Tucson district. It is especially adapted to taking care of from 2,000 to 5,000 chicks.

One of these brooding units is constructed by setting a hot water heater in a pit at one end of the brooder house and connecting it up with a series of water pipes running down through the brooder house on the floor, and arranged in such a manner that the hot water will circulate through them. These pipes are then covered with about three inches of sand. A canopy of any kind of material that will help hold some of the heat radiated from the sand and chicks is hung over the strips of sand heated by the hot water pipes. The advantage of this system is that the pipes may extend through a series of pens in a long house, and only one heater is necessary to take care of them all.

A great improvement has been made in the method of feeding baby

chicks. Where it used to be thought essential to feed a specially prepared chick mash and growing mash, very good pullets are now being produced by feeding them from one to six weeks on to maturity on a mash mixture of equal parts by weight of wheat bran and any standard egg laying mash. This being supplemented with a scratch grain.

Think of the enormous saving to the poultryman in this method, with egg laying mash much cheaper than a chick or developing mash, and bran the cheapest ingredient in an egg laying mash.

Sour milk or buttermilk in some form is a very beneficial supplement to any ration. Sour milk or buttermilk is preferred to sweet milk due to the beneficial effect of the lactic acid in the former products. Never feed buttermilk or sour milk in metal containers because of the lactic acid coming in contact with the metal forms a compound that is detrimental to the health of the chick. If semi-solid buttermilk is used, as is commonly done, a very good method is to smear the paste on a board; stand this board on edge against the wall and let them eat the milk in the past form, giving them clean fresh water to drink.

Ample green feed and direct sunlight are the remaining necessities for strong healthy chicks. Both green feed and the presence of direct sunlight are preventatives of leg weakness. Sunlight coming through ordinary window glass does not prevent leg weakness, so it is advisable to get the chicks out in the yards as soon as possible.

For the definite chick feeding schedule write to the Agricultural Extension Division, University of Arizona.

Do not mix lime with poultry droppings for ammonia will be liberated thereby destroying the value as a fertilizer. Gypsum can be used for this purpose if spread over the dropping boards.

HEALTHY FLOCKS

F. D. Crooks, extension poultryman at the University of Arkansas, says that profits are dependent upon health of flock. Only healthy hens may consume a good quantity of feed, and only hardy eaters can lay lots of eggs.

In modern poultry raising, the preventative rather than the cure is sought. Only disease free flocks will ever be profitable.

Preventative measures should start long before the chick is hatched. Chicks hatched from small eggs, old eggs or eggs laid by immature pullets are small, weakly and will never make good layers.

For strong chicks only fresh eggs of good size and shape laid by healthy hens should be set. Chicks should be raised in well-lighted, well-ventilated coops that are kept clean and sanitary. Chicks should be raised on new ground yearly to prevent gap worms, roup, intestinal worms and other troubles. Over-crowded houses, dirty drinking and feeding vessels, moldy feed cause disease. Sickly chicks should be killed to prevent others from becoming diseased.

THE COVER PAGE

Our cover page this issue carries a picture of the Mission San Xavier Del Bac which is located in the Santa Cruz valley, nine miles from the growing city of Tucson. This mission was founded by the Jesuit Order in the year 1700.

San Xavier is in the very heart of the desert, surrounded by sands and sage-brush, and hemmed in by picturesque rugged mountains. It has always attracted artists and students by its very greatness. Travelers who have seen the much advertised California Missions gaze with awe before this great, white monument of beauty standing alone in the desert—a land terrible in its desolation yet subtly beautiful in its moods of color.