

MILLPOND HATCHERY CHICK CHECK LIST

BEFORE THE CHICKS ARRIVE

- Ensure the brooder house is thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
- Ensure the brooder house is draft free, rodent free and inaccessible to wild birds.
- Bedding – Cover the brood area with clean, dry, mold free bedding, (preferably wood shavings), to a minimum of 10 cm. Chicks lose the majority of their body heat through their feet, so their bedding must be warm and insulating. It must also provide them with firm footing to avoid spraddled legs.
- Brooder Guard – Place brooder guard around the starting area to keep the chicks close to the heat, feed, and water, and to prevent straying, huddling and chilling.
- Heat – Provide a heat source, preferably more than one, at approximately 40-50 cm above floor level. Start the chicks at 30°-32°C, measuring the temperature at 5 cm above floor level. If the chicks are huddling, they require more heat, if they are panting and listless, they require less heat. Make sure the pen area is heated and brought to temperature at least 12 hours before arrival to ensure that all areas of the pen are at suitable temperatures.
- Feed – Check with your local feed supplier for a feeding program. Provide fresh high quality chick starter. Provide enough feeding space that each chick has access to the feed and does not have to travel more than 2 meters to find feed.
- Water – Provide a minimum of 1 water fount for every 50 chicks, enough water so that every chick can drink at once, and does not have to travel more than 2 meters. Make sure the water is fresh, clean and at room temperature. Do not allow the water to run out. It is a good idea to add a booster to the water, although not imperative. Ensure the dosage level is correct.
- Lighting – Provide continuous light for the first 3 days from a source separate to the heat lamps.

PICKING UP YOUR CHICKS

- Move your chicks from their pick-up point into a warm vehicle as quickly as possible, taking care to avoid drafts.
- Move them into the brooding pen as quickly as possible, again taking care to avoid drafts.
- Observe the chicks after placement to be sure all of them find feed and water, and appear comfortable.

AFTER THE CHICKS ARRIVAL THE 1ST WEEK

- Follow the above instructions for the first week, as well as:
- Gradually move the brooder guard back, totally discarding it by the end of the first week.
- After 3 days, start to restrict the light to a natural day and night routine. If heat lamps are your heat source they must remain on, and red heat lamps are recommended. Restricting light reduces cannibalism and regulates feed consumption, which reduces heart attacks and leg problems.
- Gradually reduce the heat by 3°C to 27°-29°C by the end of the first week.
- Ensure your footwear, clothing and hands are clean before entering the brooder house to help keep diseases out.
- Provide your chicks with a lot of tender loving care, and a good dose of common sense.



AFTER THE CHICKS ARRIVAL AFTER THE 1ST WEEK

- Bedding – Ensure bedding stays dry to avoid ammonia and leg problems. If it becomes wet, replace it with dry bedding.
- Heat – Continue to gradually reduce the heat by 2° to 3°C each week until you reach 21° to 22°C at the end of the sixth week.
- Feed – Continue to follow your local feed supplier's program. Keep in mind that restricting feed will reduce heart attacks and leg problems (especially in cockerels). Your chickens will take a few days longer to get to your desired weight, but they will get there with reduced mortality.
- Water – Continue to ensure that your chickens have a continuous supply of fresh, clean water.
- Lighting – Whenever possible, continue with a restricted light program.
- Ventilation – Ensure proper ventilation to provide a good supply of fresh air, as well as to remove ammonia and any other odors. It will also help to keep the bedding dry. Be careful to avoid drafts.
- Floor space – Provide a minimum of 1 square meter for every 4 chickens. Ensure adequate space to avoid cannibalism and to allow your chickens to reach their full potential.

The above information also applies to ducklings and turkey poults

NOTE:
for turkey poults add 4°C to the temperature recommendations listed above.