

## CHICKS

Feed an approximately 20% protein medicated chick starter for the first 10 – 14 days. Switch to an approximately 15% crumbled chick grower ration and continue to market weight.

White Rock Meat chicks have the ability to weigh 2 kg in as little as six weeks and will grow 4 kg to 5 kg quite easily, with excellent feed conversion. It will not hurt your White Rock Meat chicks at all to cut back a bit on protein and/or to restrict their feed after about 2 weeks of age. By doing this, you will allow the chick's heart and legs to develop more fully before putting the bulk of weight on, resulting in fewer heart attacks and leg problems. It will take a few days longer to get your birds up to kill weight, but you'll keep more of them alive.

## LAYERS

Pullets must be stimulated with light to begin their lay cycle. It is important that you continue to follow the lighting program recommended by the hatchery and to never reduce the hours of light per day once the flock is in production. When the layer chicks reach 18 weeks of age or there is the appearance of the first egg, switch from feeding schedule listed above for chicks to a layer ration. During late lay, you may observe a reduction in the eggshell quality and an increased percentage of cracked eggs. It is advantageous to top dress oyster shell as a large-particle calcium source at this time. Top dress at the rate of 1.8 grams per bird per day or feed separately in floor operations.

## TURKEY POULTS

Feed an approximately 27% protein medicated turkey starter for the first 4 – 6 weeks and then switch to an approximately 22% medicated turkey grower. When the turkeys are 12 weeks of age, switch to a non-medicated turkey finisher until market weight is achieved. Turkeys can be grown to various market weights. Turkey broilers usually weigh over 5 kg in 11 weeks. Heavy tom turkeys can reach a market weight of about 14 kg in about 16 weeks. Hen turkeys are marketed at a weight of approximately 7 kg in under 14 weeks.

## DUCKLINGS

Feed an approximately 23% protein non-medicated duck starter for about 3 weeks. Provide free access to feed and fresh water at all times. For maximum growth, switch to a pelleted duck growing ration at 3-4 weeks of age. Double the floor space every two weeks until a maximum of 4 sq. ft. per duck is available or until the birds are allowed outside to fend for themselves around the pond or barnyard.

GOOD LUCK! If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us at Wright's Feeds 'N Needs. We'll be happy to help you!

### REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

- Brooding House and Guard (You can purchase or make your own, Google DIY Chick Brooder)
- Water fountain
- Feeding station
- Brooder Heat Lamp with red light bulb
- Thermometer
- Bedding
- Newspaper to cover bedding (to train chicks to feeder)
- Chick starter feed

### ONLINE RESOURCES

#### Jones Feed Mill:

- <https://www.jfm.ca/species/Backyard-Poultry>

**Millpond Hatchery** (supplier of our chicks and check list)  
<http://millpondhatchery.ca>

#### OMAFRA (Biosecurity tips)

- <https://www.ontario.ca/page/raise-healthy-small-flock-poultry>

#### Farmers' Almanac

- <https://www.almanac.com/raising-chickens-101-how-raise-baby-chickens>

# CHICK RAISING ESSENTIALS



**WRIGHT'S**  
FEEDS 'N NEEDS

[www.wrightsfeeds.ca](http://www.wrightsfeeds.ca)  
3470 Highway 7A Blackstock, ON L0B 1M0  
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## BEFORE YOUR CHICKS ARRIVE

If you are raising your birds for meat, it is imperative to book your slaughter date at the processor as soon as possible to avoid disappointment. Check the maturity date of the chicks you order, as different birds mature at different rates.

### BROODER HOUSE

- Ensure the brooder house is thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
- It should be draft-free, rodent-free, and inaccessible to wild birds and animals.

### Bedding

- Cover the brood area with clean, dry, mold-free bedding (preferably wood shavings) to a minimum of 10 cm/4". 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. You can create a brooder guard out of cardboard. It should be 18" high, circular, and should be expanded as the chicks grow.

### Heat

- Provide a heat source, preferably more than one, at approximately 40-50 cm above floor level. Start the chicks at 30C – 32C, measuring the temperature at 5 cm/2" 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

- 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 metres to find feed.

### Water

- Provide a minimum of 1 water fountain for every 50 chicks, enough water so that every chick can drink at once and does not have to travel more than 2 metres. 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 is correct.

## 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 1<sup>ST</sup> 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 lamps are recommended. Restricting light reduces cannibalism and regulates feed consumption which reduces heart attacks and leg problems.
- Gradually reduce the heat by 3C to 27C – 29C 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.

## AFTER THE CHICKS ARRIVAL – AFTER THE 1<sup>ST</sup> WEEK

### Bedding

- Ensure bedding stays dry to avoid ammonia and leg problems. Remove and replace wet bedding.

### Heat

- Continue to gradually reduce the heat by 2C – 3C each week until you reach 21C – 22C at the end of the sixth week.

### Feed

- Continue to follow the recommended poultry feeding 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 the 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 odours. It will also help to keep the bedding dry. Be careful to avoid drafts.

### Floor space

- Provide a minimum of 1 square metre 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. Please note, turkey poults require temperatures of 4C higher than those listed above.*