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ARRIVAL DATE - FIRST DAY INSTRUCTIONS. Be sure you have some flexible time to pick up your birds from the post office. Sometimes they do not arrive when expected. Be sure your brooder area is set up and the heating source tested so the birds can go straight into the brooder as soon as they arrive. Refrain from handling or playing with the birds for the first 24 hours. Because the birds are very small we recommend heating the drinking water to 98 degrees for the first 24 hours. They will drink a lot of water. If it is too cool this can rapidly decrease their body temperature and put them into shock. Gently grasping each chick by the head, dip the beak in the water, then let go. You can add one tablespoon of sugar to one quart of 98 degree water and shake well. Use this mixture for the first eight hours and then change to regular water. Normally, the chicks will not start drinking or eating until the chick's body has warmed. So, at floor level the temperature needs to be 100 to 101 degrees directly under the heat source. Allow plenty of room so the birds can walk away from the heat source when they become too hot. Allow one brooder lam per 25 chicks using a 100 watt incandescent light bulb. The bottom of the bulb should be about 18 inches above the floor. Lay down several layers of paper towels around the brooder floor and sprinkle chick starter on the paper towels. Their feet will not slip on the paper towels and they will pick at all the sprinkled chick starter. Change the paper towels as needed. Remove the paper towels and/or sprinkled feed the next day and use normal feed in a feeder.

FEED: Use a chick starter/grower. During the first day the chicks find the feed more easily if you sprinkle it on a paper towel in the area where the chicks will be. Thereafter, put the feed in troughs that are low enough for the chicks to see and reach easily. Allow one foot of trough feeder or one round feeder for every 25 chicks. Never let the chicks run out of feed. Adding chipped boiled egg yolk on top of the feed gets the chicks off to a good start and encourages them to start eating feed right away. It is important to remove all uneaten boiled eggs after two to four hours. We don't recommend adding grit because the chick starter/grower feed is formulated for what the chick needs to digest the food. Chicks should stay on a full feed ration of chick starter/grower until they are four and one-half to five months old. **EXCEPTION:** You may want to limit feed intake on Jumbo Cornish cross starting at the 14th day by taking the feed away at night. This seems to help slow the growth of the bird just enough to allow the skeletal structure of the bird to catch up with their fast muscular development.

WATER: Maintain a one-gallon chick waterer for each 50 chicks. Do not medicate the first water. During the first day you can add on to two tablespoons of sugar to 1 quart of 98 degree water and shake well. Use regular water heated to 98 degrees on the second day. On the third day use room temperature water. Dip the beak of each chick in the water before you turn it loose. Your chicks will be thirsty when you receive them. A taste of water right away helps them find more water soon. Most baby chick loss is caused by starvation or dehydration. Never let your chicks run out of water.

HEAT: A drop light with a reflector shield and a 75, 100 or 150 watt bulb is a good source of heat. Use as many units as necessary to keep the chicks comfortable. Ensure that the lamp is hanging from a secure anchor. The bulb wattage will determine how high you hang the fixture above the birds. Chicks three to seven days old should have an air temperature one inch off the floor of 95 to 98 degrees. Raise or lower the reflector to achieve this effect and allow plenty of space so the birds can migrate to a cooler temperature if desired. Initially, regular white light bulbs are fine. However, after one to two weeks red bulbs can reduce feather picking. The temperature may need to be slightly higher for Bantams and other small bodied birds. Use a thermometer will help to ensure that you have the proper comfort level for the birds. Reduce the temperature five degrees per week until you reach 70 degrees. Begin with one or two bulbs per 50 chicks in cold weather. Then watch how the birds act. See diagram. Even after they don't need the light for warmth, the birds need a small light at night to prevent them from piling up. Be sure to watch Cornish Cross as they grow faster than other birds and will overheat more quickly.

SPACE: Try to provide one-half square foot per chick at the start. For starting 50 chicks use a draft shield and make a circle about five to six feet across. For 100 chicks make a circle seven to eight feet across. Geese should be raised separately from chicks and turkeys.

DRAFT SHIELD: Cardboard placed in a circle about 12 inches high around the chicks helps cut down drafts on the floor. Be sure the circle is large enough to allow the chicks to get away from the heat if it desires.

LITTER: Large pine shavings make a good litter. Do not use small shavings, cedar shavings, sand or sawdust because baby chicks learning to eat will ingest them and possibly die. Rice hulls, straw or hay also make good bedding. Put the litter all over the floor at least one to two inches thick. On concrete floors use three to five inches of bedding. Puppy pads work well also.

PICKING: It is very common for birds to use their beak to groom or pick themselves. The new feathers growing in are brushed with their beak and the gland above the tail provides the necessary oil. New feathers are filled with blood and if they are pulled out the resulting spill will attract other birds to pick at the area. Baby chicks will often pick each other if they are too hot, crowded or without fresh air. Occasionally bright lights also cause them to pick each other and changing to red light may help. However, sometimes they pick for no apparent reason. To stop it try putting in fresh green grass clippings several times a day and darken the room. Chunks of grass sod can also be set around for the chicks to pick at. As a last resort, try cutting off about one-third of the top beak with a very sharp knife or razor blade. Cut from top to bottom straight down. Be careful not to crush the beak by pushing too hard on the knife or razor blade. Do not cut the lower beak, just the top one. Birds picking each other can also be caused by stress from having lights on 24 hours a day. Remove the light at noon after the birds no longer require heat. As it become dark earlier in fall and winter, the birds will automatically lie down by each other to sleep. Try not to disturb them during this time because it could make them pile up on each other and smother. It is common for them to lay part of their body across each other, you just don't want them two to three birds deep. To treat chick that have been picked, smear pine tar or menthol flavored ointment on the injured area and continue to treat until healed.

AFTER FOUR WEEKS:

1. Increase floor area to three-quarters square foot per chick.
2. Increase feeders to provide two and one-half to three inches of space per chick.
3. Increase waterers to one five gallon fount per 100 chicks.
4. Install roosts at the back of brooder area. Allow four inches per bird with roost poles six inches apart.
5. Open windows in day-time. Leave only partly open at night.
6. Prevent water puddles around founts. Place founts on low wire platform.
7. Chicks can range outside on warm, sunny days, but only if clean range is available.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS AFTER CHICKS ARRIVE:

If the chicks had a hard trip, instead of using the standard feed and water suggestions listed above, put two tablespoons of sugar in one quart of 100 degree water and shake well. Add a little of this water mixture to a small amount of feed, stir and sprinkle it around the chicks. Mix only right before you are ready to feed. Do a small amount at a time. As they eat it, mix some more and sprinkle it around them to get their attention. Never leave this mixture for more than a couple hours: it will sour and cause illness.

Rear end "pasting up" Sometimes the stress of shipping causes manure to stick to the back of the chick. It is important to remove this daily. Pull off gently or, better yet, wash off with a cloth and warm water. It will disappear in a few days as the chick starts to grow. If chicks appear droopy add a sulfa type drug to their drinking water as directed on the package.

BABY TURKEYS: Use the basic instructions above, but watch more carefully as turkeys tend to chill quicker than chicks. Baby turkeys are known to be somewhat dumb. Therefore, you must make sure they know where the feed is. It is helpful to put colored marbles in the water fountains and to sprinkle some feed on cardboard during the first few days. If they don't start eating and drinking properly you might have "starve-outs". If turkeys show any signs of diarrhea, add sulfa type (Sulmet, etc.) drug to their drinking water as directed on the package. Do not use any slick paper for bedding. Baby turkeys easily slide on slick surfaces and lack the leg muscle to prevent their legs from spreading apart, resulting in sprattle-legged poults. It's also good to raise a few standard sized chicks with the turkeys. The chicks help teach the turkeys how to eat and drink.

GOSLINGS: Follow the same care for baby chicks except goslings do not need the extra heat as long as baby chicks because of their size and rapid growth rate. They will require more care, in that they are messier with water fountains. They can be turned outside at an earlier age depending on the weather. Goslings love to eat grass and weeds and will begin grazing as soon as they are turned out. Do not let gosling out on a pound, as they will drown unless they have a mother to get them off the pound. Do not medicate water for geese. Ducks and geese can be raised together. However, do not raise with chickens, turkeys or other fowl. Since the geese are messier with water they can cause your other birds to get sick and die. Once they are fully grown, they can be placed with other birds providing they have plenty of room.

SAFE HANDLING OF POULTRY: Live animals and pets can be a source of potentially harmful micro-organisms; therefore, precautions must be taken when handling and caring for them to prevent fecal/oral transmission among people. Children should be supervised as they handle animals and pets to make sure they don't put their hands or fingers in their mouth. Always wash your hands with soap and warm water after handling any animal or pet. For information and free materials contact: United Stated Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service at <http://healthybirds.aphis.usda.gov>.

