

Taking Care of Berg's Hatchery Chicks



Transporting Your Chicks Home

One of the most common mistakes customers make when taking chicks home is having the heat on HIGH in the vehicle. All the floor temps in charts below DO NOT apply to transporting birds in a vehicle. The best place for a box of chicks is in the back seat of the car, van or truck, not in the trunk or box of truck. A safe temperature is 70 F (21 C), roughly room temperature. Good air circulation around boxes and no direct heat or air conditioning blowing on the boxes. If you're transporting chicks on a hot day and you need to make a stop make sure there is sufficient air and proper temps around the chick boxes, but best to go directly home with birds.

Litter

Fresh litter placed on floor of a well disinfected brooder house. Litter materials most commonly used for brooding are good quality wheat straw. Soft wood shavings can be used, but must have virtually no sawdust in them. Three or four inches of litter should be used, spread evenly over the floor. Do NOT use horticultural peat moss as it may cause respiratory problems. YOU SHOULD ALWAYS HAVE A BEDDING FOR THEM, NOT NEWSPAPER OR CARDBOARD AS IT DOES NOT HOLD HEAT AND IS SLIPPERY CAUSING DAMAGE TO THE CHICK'S LEGS.

Temperature

The brooder should be capable of maintaining a temperature of 90° F (32° C) at floor level, the furthest point from the heat source. A thermometer should be placed here in your pen on the bedding. If it does not read 90 F (32 C) your chicks are usually too cold, some breeds are hardier than others but this rule generally applies to all chicks and poults. **Tip: Don't put thermometer on wall this just gives room temperature you want to know the floor temperature where your birds actually are.**

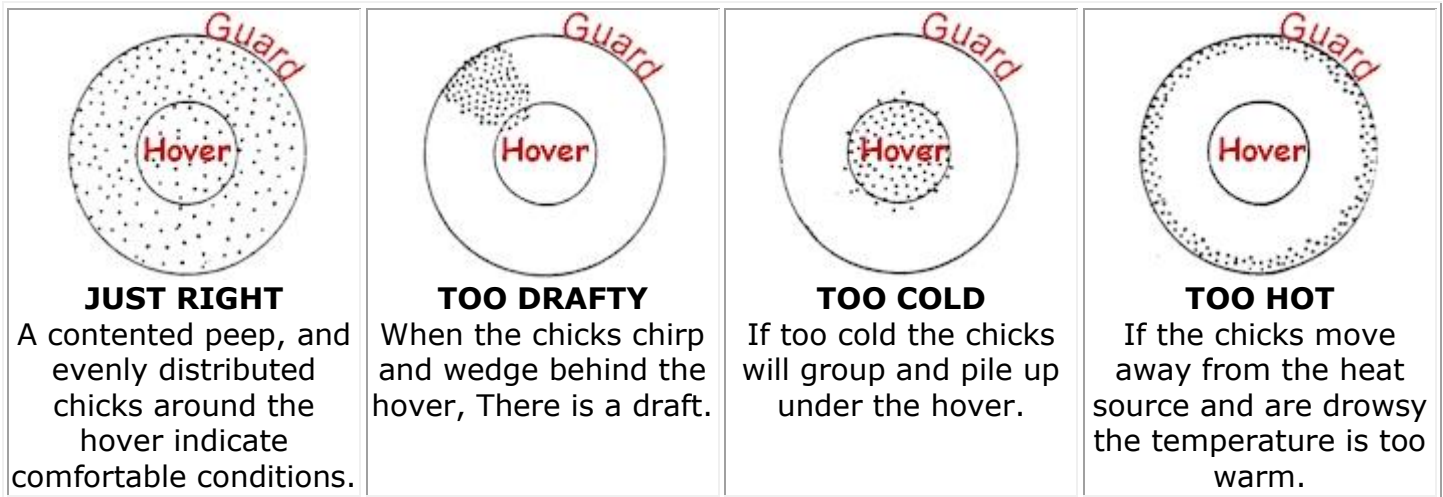
The diagrams below are good management tools, but KNOWING your floor temperature is the best brooding management there is. If you find your outside perimeter temps are too low make your brooder pen smaller; you can always make it larger as the chicks grow. **The first 14 days of a chick's life are crucial.** Baby chicks cannot regulate their body temperature till about day 14 so you have to; if your brooder facilities cannot maintain these temperatures in cooler weather wait until outside temperatures are above freezing which means ordering your birds for a delivery later in the spring season. Your outside brooder perimeters should be taken in the early morning hours when outside temperatures are usually the coldest. As the chicks age, they require less supplement heat. The down which covers the body at hatching is replaced with feathers which reduce the loss of heat from the body. This means that the amount of heat supplied to poultry can be reduced as they grow older. **The initial brooding temperature of 95° should be reduced to around 65° - 70° at about 6 weeks of age.** A brooding schedule should look like the table to the left.

*****do not use white heat bulbs for brooding chicks, only red bulbs*****

The table should be used as a guide only. The best thermometer to use in determining proper brooder

Age of Chicks (Weeks)	Room Temperature
1	95° F (35°C)
2	90° F (32°C)
3	85° F (29°C)
4	80° F (27°C)
5	75° F (24°C)
6	70° F (21°C)

temperature is the chick or poultry itself. If the birds huddle too close to the brooder, the temperature is too low. If the chicks tend to congregate some distance away from the heat source the temperature is too high. If the proper brooding temperature is used, the chicks should be evenly distributed over the entire brooding area. The diagrams below show how to use chicks as a guide for the correct brooding temperature.



As the birds grow older, lower the temperature about 5 degrees per week until 65° is reached. A temporary increase in brooding temperatures of about 5 degrees may be of value for reducing side effects of stress resulting from handling and moving.

Extra Tips

PULLET REARING - Egg Layers

Clean and disinfect, brooding, water is all the same as the Cornish Cross Giants.

- 1. Floor Space** - the first 3 weeks 1/2 square foot per chick. Expand to 1 1/2 square feet per bird for the balance of growing period.
- 2. Feed** - To start baby chicks use small troughs, box tops or egg flats. Then switch to 3-50 lbs. feeders per 100 or equivalent.
- 3. Lighting** - Day old to 16 weeks the birds will need 8 hours of light. Gradually add 1 hour per week until you're at 16 hours of light for maximum production.
- 4. Nests** - The bottom of the nests should be 27 inches above the floor. With a two tier nest provide one nest hole for every four birds in the laying flock. Nests should be filled with an ample supply of clean nesting materials. Close nests at night to keep them clean. Open nests early in morning to avoid floor eggs.
- 5. Flock Health** - Dead and culled birds are a source of disease and therefore should be collected and disposed of daily.

For good management practices keep complete, accurate records of daily feed and water intake, egg production and mortality.

