

Challenges at the Placement of the day old Broiler

INTRODUCTION

This Bulletin is mainly directed to broiler farm workers. It is an attempt to discuss the main challenges and opportunities to help optimize the productivity of present day broilers. It covers the period from day one and placement in the farm, until 7 days of age.

The genetic progress and advances in the broiler industry have greatly influenced the management programs for the present day broilers in order to obtain the economic return in terms of weight, feed conversion, livability and meat yield.

The short life of the broiler, a consequence of its rapid growth, gives no time to compensate for initial management mistakes.

OBJECTIVES for the 1–7 DAY PERIOD

- To obtain a minimum of 99% livability.
- To get the earliest and most efficient use of the equipment: feeders and drinkers, by the chicks.
- At 7 days to get 4 times the weight of day one.
- To get a minimum of 80% uniformity at 7 days of age.
- To assure complete re-absorption of the yolk sac.

Challenges (dangers) during the 1-7 day period

- Small chicks, progeny from young breeders (less than 35 weeks) when placed mixed with progeny of more mature breeders.
- Uneven temperature (air, litter) at chick level at reception.
- Wet litter.
- Presence of inactive chicks during the first 72 hours.
- Slow feed and water consumption (nipples) during first 3 days.
- Slow re-absorption or retention of the yolk sac.
- Presence of “big belly” and/or lethargic chicks.

| SUGGESTIONS | REASONS |
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| To establish a “down time” of minimum 14 days between placements. | Minimize field health challenges. |
| Separated placement of chick's progeny from breeders younger than 35 weeks old. | Improve uniformity, diminishing competition for space and equipment. |
| Pre-heating of house and litter: 29° C for litter temperature and 32° C of air at chick level. | Uniform temperature prevents smothering and helps make good use of the space. |
| Make sure litter is dry. | Wet litter is main cause of heat loss through the shanks. |
| Placement of paper on the litter with feed distributed evenly. | Excellent stimulus for rapid first ingesta. Feed “everywhere”. |
| Frequent checking of drinkers (pressure of nipples) and additional drinkers during first week. | Very important to train chicks to find and use nipples with visible drop. |
| To stimulate early and fast feed intake at chick arrival. | Indispensable for a rapid early digestive system development, mucosa, enzymes. |
| Good feed crumble (2 – 3 mm) - it can be ground corn or mini pellets if available. | Stimulate initial peristalsis (muscle contractions) of digestive system. |
| “Walk” the chicks frequently (every 2 hours) to stimulate activity. | Assist in re-absorption of yolk sac, maternal antibodies and general activity. Chicks that walk....eat. |
| Twenty-three hours of light during first 7 days. Uniform intensity of minimum 20 lux. | Prevent lethargy, stimulate activity, feed intake. |
| Provide a good chick starter (22-23% protein, 3025–3100 Kcal ME / Kg | Assure good weight gain during first 7 days |
| Minimize competition among the chicks, providing sufficient space, feeders and drinkers. | Prevent uniformity problems and optimize feed conversion. |

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