

## **MARKET CHICKEN HELP SHEET**

### **SUPPLY LIST**

Large bin or box for brooder (screen to cover)  
Chicken or chick waterer

Brooder Lamp w/Red 250w Bulb  
Feeder - if you don't have a chick feeder, use enough shallow dishes so they all have room.

Clean, dry bedding - NO sawdust  
Thermometer – optional

Chick feed - any small chicken feed with a protein count of 20-24%. You can use a Broiler Starter/Finisher.

Water supplement-Helpful, but not essential.

Can be found in hatchery catalogs and some farm supply stores. You could also use white vinegar.  
Helps chicks recover from shipping stress.

### **BE PREPARED BEFORE YOUR CHICKS COME HOME!**

1. **SET UP THE BROODER** - Be sure the box or bin is clean and dry. Put it in a quiet, draft free place. Cover with old screen or chicken wire (keeps chicks in, small hands & pets out). Suspend the lamp over brooder. If you have a thermometer, turn on lamp and warm the brooder. Put thermometer at chick level. It should be approx. 98 degrees. If you don't have a thermometer, you will be able to adjust the heat by observing the behavior. If you have chlorinated water, fill a container the night before and let it sit. You will have to warm it before you give it to the chicks.
2. **FILL FEEDER & WATERER** - Before you go to pick up the chicks, fill the feeder. Warm the water and add the supplement if you want to use one. If you don't have the supplement, you can add 1 teaspoon of white vinegar to 1 gallon of tap water. After the second or third day, just give plain water.

### **BRING THE CHICKS HOME**

If your waterer hasn't been filled yet, get it set up before you unpack the chicks. As you remove the chicks from the shipping box, dip their beaks in the water and set them near it. **BE GENTLE AND DO NOT OVER HANDLE!** Chicks are fragile and easily stressed. Once all the chicks are in the brooder, cover with your screen (if using), sit back and observe.

If, after they are settled, you see that they all pile up under the lamp, you need to lower it. They are too cold. If you see that they are avoiding the light, it is too warm. Raise it, then watch. This is something you need to check several times a day, as many things affect the temp. If the chicks are fairly well distributed throughout the brooder, they should be comfortable. Keep checking and adjusting when needed.

Keep the feeders full for the first 2-3 weeks. When you see the birds start feathering out and getting chunky, start letting the food run out in late afternoon. You should also be decreasing the heat as they grow. Over feeding these birds can cause leg & organ problems. At approx. 4-5 weeks, the feed should be reduced to a 19-21 percent protein feed. Depending on weather and where you put them, they may be ready to go outside or in a large pen or cage. Once they start getting heavy, they overheat easily. Keep them in a shady, well ventilated area. **DO NOT** handle more than necessary. They may look big and sturdy, but are thin-skinned and easily stressed. The last 3 weeks or so is when they hit the major growth. Keep them fed well during the day and provide enough feeders so that they do not fight. They will act like they are starving, but don't overfeed. Make sure to provide good ventilation and plenty of fresh, cool water. Don't let them run out.

With some observation and care these birds are not hard to raise. **AND**, they grow very fast.

Good Luck!!