



2026 Wilson County 4-H Poultry Project

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4-H Poultry Project Agent

How Chick Chain Works

- 25 Chicks on March 13, 2026
- Bring 6 Back to the County Show & Auction.
- PLEASE communicate with us if there is an issue.
- MUST ATTEND SHOW. We like for the 4-H members to be a part of the show and auction. Chickens MUST sale at Auction.
- This is an educational opportunity and experience. Not just free chickens.

- Be sure to read carefully the 4-H publication entitled “Growing Blue Ribbon Pullets” before and after your chicks arrive.



Main Areas of Focus

- Housing
- Brooding Equipment
- Feeders
- Water
- Nutrition



Housing Requirements

- Does not need to be elaborate or expensive
- Easy access to feed and water
- Space
- Draft-free ventilation
- Light
- Temperature
- Do not use cedar shavings



Brooding Chicks

- Each chick should have 2 ½ to 3 sq. feet of floor space
- Draft-free ventilation to provide oxygen and reduce carbon dioxide
- Use brooder guards
- Cover floor with 3” of clean, dry litter

Light Requirements

- First 48 hours give chicks 24 hours of light so they can find the feed and water.
- One 25-watt bulb will provide enough light for a 10 ft. x 10 ft. house.

Heat Requirements

- A 100-watt bulb will provide enough heat
- Use a thermometer to gage the temperature in brooder
- Heat source needs to be adjustable.
- Put thermostat at the bottom of the brooder.



Temperature Requirements

1 day to 1 week – 95 degrees F

1 week to 2 weeks – 90 degrees F

2 weeks to 3 weeks – 85 degrees F

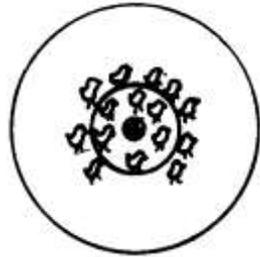
3 weeks to 4 weeks – 80 degrees F

4 weeks to 5 weeks – 75 degrees F

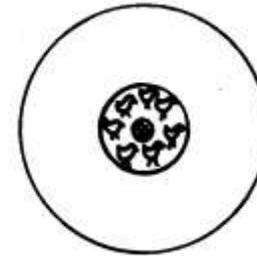
5 weeks to 6 weeks – 70 degrees F

Proper Brooder Temperature

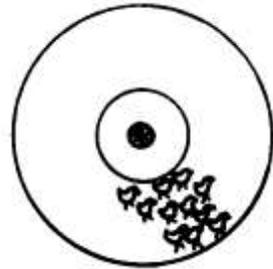
Just Right



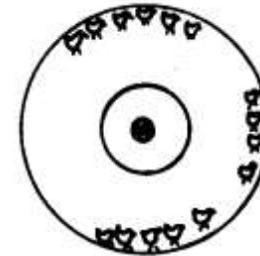
Too Cold



Too Drafty



Too Hot



Feed

- First day give chicks 8% sugar water to drink (1 ½ cups per gallon of water)
- Sugar serves as a quick and easy energy source
- Three hours after the chicks have water, give them feed

Amount and Kind of Feed

Age	Amt. And Kind
0 – 6 weeks	100 lbs. of starter
6 – 20 weeks	400 lbs. of grower
20 weeks – laying	100 lbs. of layer every 2 weeks

Water

- Cheapest nutrient, most neglected
- Softens food, aids in digestion
- Serves as a carrier of waste products
- Temperature regulation
- Lubricant for body tissues

Signs of Avian Influenza

- Lack of energy and appetite
- Decreased egg production, and or soft shelled or mishapen eggs.
- Swelling of the head, eyelids, comb, wattles and hocks
- Purple discoloration of the wattles, combs and legs
- Runny nose, coughing, sneezing

Signs of Avian Influenza

- Stumbling or falling down
- Diarrhea
- Sudden death without any clinical signs

Report Sick Birds

- <http://healthybirds.aphis.usda.gov>
- Call the National Center for Animal Health
Emergency Management 1-301-734-8073

Facts To Remember

- Seventy-Five percent of the cost is feed
- DO NOT waste feed
- DO NOT throw feed on the ground. Use feeder tray or flat card board for first two days
- Watch chicks closely first two days
- Make sure they have plenty of water
- DO NOT use cedar shavings!



Facts To Remember

- Make sure they have plenty of water
- Watch chicks closely first two days
- Make sure chickens are securely housed





Rhode Island Reds

- The **Rhode Island Red** is a popular chicken choice for backyard flocks because of their egg laying abilities and hardiness. They are a dual purpose chicken for their egg laying and meat production. They also make for a great pet or show chicken. Rhode Island Reds lay between 200 and 280 eggs per year.

Buff Orpingtons

- The Buff Orpington is a delightful chicken perfect for children or beginners. A favorite among backyard chicken keepers, these large **dual-purpose** breeds are excellent egg layers while being equally suitable for the table. Quick to mature, hardy, and friendly, they are easy to keep and fun to have around.



Barred Rocks

- New England in the middle of the 19th century and was first exhibited as a breed in 1869 yielding abundant eggs and tasty meat.
- they do not let winter blizzards interrupt laying.
- Purpose: Dual-Purpose
- Production: 250 Large Brown Eggs/Year
- Temperament: Calm, Docile, Easy to Care For
- Mature Weight: 5-6 lbs.
- Hardiness: Cold and Heat Hardy
- Broodiness: Rarely



Poultry Judging

- Begin practice in late July
- Learn to:
 - Judge Hens
 - Grade Eggs
 - Candle Eggs
 - Grade Carcass'
 - Identify Parts



Wilson County 4-H Poultry Show

- July 25, 2026
- Pop Smart Barn at Wilson County Fair Grounds
- Bring best 6
- Birds will need to arrive between 7:30 and 8:30 for testing
- They will be judged and sold



Wilson County 4-H Poultry Show

- NEW THIS YEAR!
- Premium Checks = Higher. 😊
MUST ATTEND SHOW TO
GET PREMIUM AWARD!



Wilson County 4-H Poultry Show

- NEW THIS YEAR!
- Skill-A-Thon Contest
 - 4-H members will do skill-a-thon after they check in their chickens.
 - Breeds, Equipment, poultry knowledge, etc.
 - Top 5 scores in each grade division will receive an award.
 - Providing a Study guide on our website to help prepare.



Thank You!

