

Placing Poult and Proper Brooding

Achieving the genetic potential of your flock begins before it is placed. The care and environment that poults receive at placement and during brooding will essentially set the path the flock will take. It is important to practice good basic animal husbandry skills during this time in order to achieve the best possible final results.

Objective - To provide an environment from day one that will:

1. Encourage activity, feed consumption and growth.
2. Minimize stress that could negatively impact bird growth, health, welfare and overall flock uniformity.
3. Allow the poult to express its genetic potential.

Prior to Poult Arrival

- Thoroughly clean and disinfect houses, the surrounding areas and all equipment.
- Treat houses for rodents and bugs before set-up and establish a program to be continually monitored for the duration of the flock.
- Flush, clean and sanitize waterlines, hoses and drinkers. Ensure all cleaners and disinfectants are removed.
- Check water source for acceptable water quality and ensure it is within the correct temperature range (65°-75° F; 18°-24° C). *Water quality is an essential element in achieving healthy flocks.*
- Spread clean litter material evenly to a depth of 3-4" (7.5-10cm). It should be leveled and compacted in the brooding area.

- Check brooders or other heat sources to ensure they are in excellent condition. *This is particularly important because any toxic gases that are emitted will be contained in the brooding area by the cardboard rings.*
- Arrange feeders, drinkers, heaters and fans to allow poults to maintain body temperature without dehydration and to find feed and water easily.
 - Typical set-up is 4 trough-type feeders per brooder and a maximum of 100 poults per bell-type drinker.
 - Supplemental feeders and drinkers should be used to ensure birds are never more than 6.5 feet (2m) away from feed and water.
- Test house environmental alarms to ensure they are in good working order. Establish regular testing procedures and have a standby generator on-site.
- Operate and balance the ventilation systems. *Ammonia levels in the house should be minimized at all times.*
- Establish the delivery time so poults may be unloaded and placed as quickly as possible.
- Pre-heat houses to achieve target house, floor and litter temperatures.
- Fill supplemental feeders and place them in the brooding area in the proper ratio.
- Set light intensity and duration (2.5 foot candles/25 lux; 23 hr).
- Ensure all poults will be able to eat and drink immediately on placement in the house.

Poult Placement

- Ensure brooders, rings and room temperatures are correct before poult arrive. Never chill poult. *Poult level temperature could be 5°-15°F (3-8°C) below room temperature as most thermostats are at least 4 feet (1.2m) from the floor.*
- Use sufficient ventilation settings during brooding to remove humidity, carbon dioxide and other gases and to promote activity. Try to achieve this without causing drafts on the poult.
- Conduct a final check of feed and water availability and distribution within the house.
- Provide feed in crumble form in supplemental feeders during the early brooding period so poult have easy access.
- Place poult quickly, gently and evenly over the brooding area, no more than 250-350 poult per brooder. *The longer poult are in transport boxes, the greater the dehydration. This may result in early mortality and reduced growth potential.*
- Group poult by breeder age, if mixing poult from different age breeder flocks is unavoidable.
- Remove empty boxes from the house as soon as possible.
- Leave poult to settle for one to two hours to become accustomed to their new environment.
- After the settling period, check that all poult are active and have easy access to feed and water.
- Check equipment, temperatures and ventilation every four to six hours after placement for the first 24 hours and adjust where necessary.
- Replenish feed frequently to encourage eating and minimize feed spillage. Move feeder location slightly to control litter cake.

- If using colored feed additives, wait until the poult have been in the rings for eight hours before the first application. This will allow the poult to get used to their new environment.
- After 4-5 days, supplemental drinkers should be removed at the rate of 25% per day. Begin removing supplemental feeders at the rate of 25% per day when mechanical feeders are introduced.
- Open rings at 7-10 days and divide house into quarters or more. This is a good time to consider using migration fences.
- Place supplemental feeders and drinkers in close proximity to the main systems.

Brooder House Temperature Profile

Week	Target Room Temperature	
	°F	°C
1	82	28
2	80	27
3	78	26
4	74	23
5	72	22
6	70	21
7	68	20
8	66	19

Brooder Temperature Settings*

	°F	°C
Directly beneath brooder	100 - 105	38 - 40
One foot (0.3m) from edge of brooder	88 - 92	31 - 33
Edge of ring	78 - 82	26 - 28

*12-14 foot (3.7-4.2m) rings with 18 inch (45 cm) brooder guard

The contents of this article are © Aviagen Turkeys and the advice contained herein is given as a guide and may need to be varied to meet a specific customer operation. This advice should not be regarded as a form of guarantee.

