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...Keeping a Flock Healthy*

Proper management is essential to raising healthy chicks.

Here are a few guidelines to help you raise chicks the Purina Way:

- **Environment: “Keep it clean, keep it dry”**

Warm, dry housing without drafts is absolutely necessary. Make sure your enclosure (barn, coop or housing) is predator proof. Clean and disinfect housing, feeders and waterers before chicks arrive. Disinfect regularly. Litter (bedding) should be 2"-5" deep; use wood shavings, straw, etc. This will make certain that your birds get off to the right start.

- **Space Requirement: “No crowding allowed”**

Chicks need approximately 0.8 sq. ft. of floor space per bird until 6 weeks of age. Increase this to 1.0 - 2.0 sq. ft. from 6 - 20 weeks, as they grow, depending on size of breed, outdoor run availability, temperature, etc. That's about a 5' x 5' space for 25 chicks. Double it at 6 - 8 months old.

Type / Age	Square feet of floor space
Hatch - 6 weeks	0.8 - 1.0
6 - 20 weeks	1.0 - 2.0
Roasters 12 - 20 weeks	2.0 - 3.0

*Please visit <http://poultry.purinamills.com/NUTRITIONMANAGEMENT/HealthNutrition/default.aspx>

- **Temperature: “Avoid the Big Chill”**

Day old chicks need to be kept at 90°F -95°F. Electric brooders especially for chicks are available to make life easy. Or a heat lamp may be suspended about 20" above the floor -- or better, two in case one burns out. A chick guard made of chicken wire or cardboard encircling the heat source will keep chicks close to heat, feed and water and keep them from "piling up" and smothering in corners. It can be moved outward as chicks grow for more space, so leave extra material at one end. Monitor temperature daily by placing a thermometer at chick level. Comfort can be observed. If chicks huddle under the light, they are too cold. If chicks huddle in corners, they are too hot. Reduce 5°F each week until minimum of 65°F is achieved and the birds are ready for your yard or chicken coop.

- **Water: “Wet their whistles”**

One 1-quart waterer per 25 chicks. Use fresh, cool (not cold) water, and be sure to clean and replenish daily. Disinfect waterers prior to use and then weekly. Dip beaks of the chicks to induce drinking. Elevate waterer after first week to reduce contamination from litter. Waterer should not be higher than the chick’s back. Double waterer capacity at 6 weeks. Provide adult birds 1 - 2, one-gallon waterers, depending upon floor space for every 25 birds.

- **Feed: Stay with Purina Mills® Sunfresh® Recipe products all the way.**

Feeder(s): One foot long per 25 chicks. Keep full at all times, scatter Purina starter ration on newspapers first 2-3 days to encourage eating. For adult birds provide 36 inches of feeder space for 25 chickens, ducks and geese and 100 inches for 25 turkeys.

Small/Medium Breeds/Egg Laying Chicks: Give Purina Mills® Start & Grow® SunFresh® Recipe until 18-20 weeks old and then switch to Layena® SunFresh® Recipe. For best egg production, use artificial light in laying house to create maximum 17-18 hour day. Do not decrease the length of lighting period when flocks are in production. Light and Layena® SunFresh® Recipe, not protein, are the keys to healthier eggs.

- **Disease Control:**

Over the long term, disease is likely to occur in almost every poultry flock. Signs will be reduced feed consumption, reduced egg production, droopy, sick looking birds, very loose droppings on the floor or dead birds. Immediate action should be taken when any of these problems appear.

- **Preventing Disease: “Starts with sound management”**

This starts with a strict sanitation program between flocks, and relies on eliminating problems before they occur. Different age groups should be kept isolated. Housing and equipment should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected between broods.

Unnecessary traffic between flocks should be avoided. Surroundings should be kept comfortable, with good ventilation and dry litter. Waterers should be disinfected weekly. Healthy chicks should be purchased which have been vaccinated.

- **Predators: “Safety First”**

The surest way to prevent losses from predators is to be sure fencing is secure and high enough to keep birds in. Confining birds eliminates losses. Double-check housing for gaps or "holes" in housing that might be attractive to predators. If they are allowed to run in a yard (free-range), be sure that all birds are in at dusk and the door of the house securely closed for the night.

Be sure to store feed in metal containers such as big garbage cans to avoid attracting rats, mice, raccoons, etc. This will reduce a predators' desire to invade your birds home area.