

# Management of Broiler Chicks Under Tropical Conditions

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One day old baby broiler chicks can suffer from stress. The conditions that lead to stress are discussed below. Stress influences final performance of the chicks resulting in decline in final weight, increased feed conversion and cost per pound of meat produced.

## Biosecurity

Biosecurity refers to keeping disease off your farm. It means that the area or pens in which the chicks would be raised must be clean and disinfected before the chicks arrived. Remove used litter. Disinfect the feeder bins and watering equipment. Secure the pens from rats and rodents as these transmit diseases to chickens. The litter must be kept as dry as possible. To achieve this, it becomes important to prevent water spill from the waterer and from rain. Wet litter is a major contributor to poultry diseases particularly worms that infect chickens. It is advisable to use new and fresh litter for every batch of broiler birds. Prevent local yard chickens or creole fowls from mixing with the chicken. Consider using a disinfection pad at the door to the poultry pen.

## Air Quality

Broiler chicks need warm fresh air without cold draft. Check your pens to ensure that the chicks are getting warm fresh air.

## Brooding Temperatures

Broiler chicks cannot regulate their internal body temperature for approximately half of their life. Baby chicks would require the warmth as a newborn baby.

Elevated temperature can stress the birds, and so the ventilation must be adequate to maintain the required temperatures. Temperatures between 31-33 degree centigrade are recommended in the brooding pens. Lower temperatures depress growth, increase the feed needed to gain the required weight.

## Water and Feed

Ideally baby chicks should be provided with water in less than 8 hours from the time of hatching. Lengthy delays can result in dehydration. Use clean water. Contaminated water can spread disease. Provide water as soon as possible to chicks.