USE OF THE ELECTRIC HOVER TYPE
CHICK BROODER

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The extension of electric lines to serve most Texas farms has provided another source of heat, light, and power for farm production. One of the places that electric heat can be used effectively is in brooding chicks.

Many farmers and poultrymen who have brooded chicks with electricity say that the electric hover type brooder: (1) provides a uniform temperature under the hover and is easily controlled; (2) requires a minimum of labor for care and maintenance; (3) offers little danger of fire; (4) does not give off objectionable fumes; and (5) provides heat under the hover only, thus permitting the chicks to feed and exercise in a cool room where they will grow and feather rapidly.

SELECTING THE BROODER

1. The brooder may be a commercial unit or homemade.
2. At least seven square inches of space under the hover per chick should be provided. A brooder 60 inches square has 60 x 60 or 3600 square inches and is usually recommended for 500 chicks.
3. Insulation in the top or canopy saves heat and lowers the cost of operation.
4. Ventilation under the hover is necessary to remove moisture and provide clean fresh air. Hovers for 200 chicks or more should have a small motor driven fan ventilator to assure good ventilation.

INSTALLING AND OPERATING THE BROODER

1. Purchase or build a new brooder or clean and repair the old brooder well in advance of brooding season. Check the following:
   - *Wiring* - Check all wiring, tighten all loose connections, replace damaged parts, and be sure the plug fits securely into the convenience outlet.
   - *Thermostat* - If damaged, replace.
   - *Fan* - If the brooder has a fan remove dirt - oil if place is provided.
   - *Thermometer* - See that it is not broken and will respond to temperature change.
   - *Pilot light, attraction light, and heating element* - Be sure they operate.
   - *Brooder curtain* - It should be clean, in good repair, and securely mounted.
2. Locate the brooder well away from the walls so that chicks will have access to all sides of it.

3. Place a brooder guard of poultry netting, cardboard or other material around the hover to prevent chicks getting chilled. The guard should be 12 to 18 inches high and not more than 24 to 36 inches away from the hover. The guard may be removed after the first four to seven days.

4. Adjust brooder height so that the brooder curtain is about one inch above the litter or floor.

5. Start the brooder at least two days before the chicks arrive. Adjust the temperature under the edge of the hover two inches above the floor for 90 to 95 degrees. The temperature may be lowered five degrees each week until no heat is needed.

**COST OF OPERATION**

Records of electric brooder operation on Texas farms over a period of years show that an average of one-half kilowatt hour of electricity is required to brood a chick.

For additional information on chick management you can obtain the following bulletins from your county agricultural or home demonstration agent:

1. Broiler Production B-204
2. Growing Chicks for Flock Replacement C-298

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**TEXAS AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE**

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