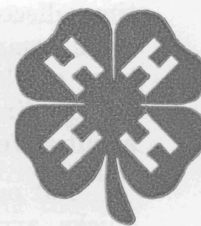


# How to Produce Broilers for Show

B. J. GRIFFIN AND B. C. WORMELI  
EXTENSION POULTRY HUSBANDMEN  
*The Texas A. & M. College System*



**T**O BE A SUCCESSFUL BROILER PRODUCER you should:

1. Select good, well-bred chicks.
2. Use a top-quality broiler feed.
3. Follow excellent management during the entire brooding and growing period.
4. Plan an efficient broiler production program and follow it closely.

## *Type Chicks to Purchase*

Select a predominantly white cornish cross chick. The cornish breeding gives more meat on the breast and legs. The chicks must be free of diseases. Consult your county agricultural agent or adult leader before you purchase the broiler chicks.

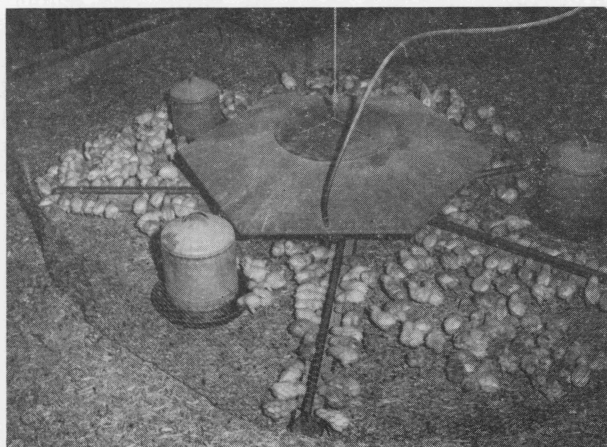
Purchase at least 50, but preferably 100 chicks, when growing broilers for show. By having 50 or more birds it will be easier to select good uniform birds for the show. If possible, pick up the chicks at the hatchery because diseases may be contracted and the birds may get chilled on public transportation.

## *Before Chicks Arrive*

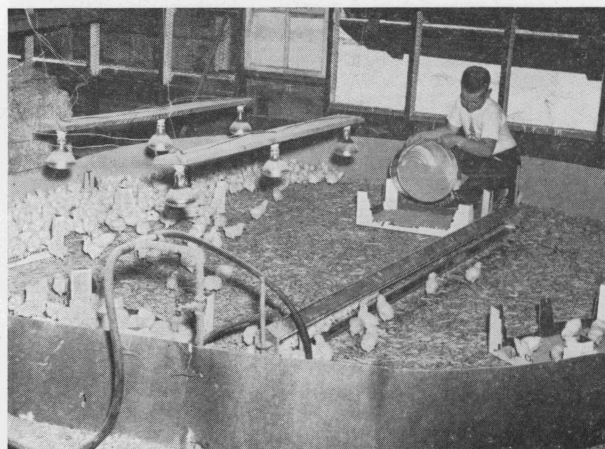
Be prepared for the chicks 2 days in advance. Allow at least 2 square feet of floor space for each bird. If the house is 10' x 10' it will hold 50 broilers. A house 10' x 20' will

hold 100 broilers. Commercial broilers need 1 square foot per bird but broilers for show should have 2 square feet. Have the house clean and disinfected. Put 6 inches of litter on the floor. Wood shavings, cane fiber, ground corn cobs or peanut hulls make good litter. Use the one which is available and most economical. Stir the litter each week to keep it from packing. Hard and damp places in the litter will cause breast blisters on the birds.

Regulate the brooder and run it 24 hours before the chicks arrive. Gas, electric and infrared bulbs are good sources of heat for brooding chicks. If hover-type brooders are used, the temperature should be 95 degrees F., 2 inches above the floor at the edge of the hover. Gradually lower this temperature 5 degrees F. per week until 75 degrees F. is reached. If birds are well feathered at this



This ideal brooding arrangement has feeders arranged like spokes of a wheel around the brooder and the waterers are distributed evenly.



These chicks are being started in feed placed in chick boxes. Note the chick guard used to keep birds near heat, water and feed.

time, discontinue the heat. Cardboard or wire chick guard rings may be used to hold the baby chicks close to the heat, feed and water for the first week. The chick guards should be about 3 feet from the brooder.

Put out feed and water the day before the chicks arrive. When the chicks arrive, distribute them around the brooder and leave them to eat and drink. Check them often to see if they are doing well.

### **After Chicks Arrive**

Keep lights on the baby chicks at night for the first 10 days. After 10 days leave the lights on 2 hours and off 2 hours at night. This is practical only if a time clock is available to regulate the lights. Where a time clock is used to turn lights off at intervals, a 10-watt bulb should be kept burning all night to keep the birds from crowding when the main lights go off.

### **Feeding Recommendations**

Start the baby chicks eating from small feeders and chick boxes. After a week take the chick boxes away and put down more feeders.

	Feeder Space	
1 to 3 days	Feed at floor level	Put feed in chick boxes or paper plates and small chick feeders
4 days to 3 weeks	2 inches of feeder space per bird	
3 weeks to 9 weeks	4 inches of feeder space per bird	
	Water Space	
1 to 3 weeks	Three ½-gallon waterers per 100 chicks	
3 to 9 weeks	Four 2-gallon waterers or two 4-foot waterers per 100 birds	



Start with small feeders and waterers. Replace with larger feeders and waterers when chicks are about 3 weeks old.



Keep feeders adjusted at wing height to prevent feed waste. A deep, clean litter will aid in the production of more top-quality broilers.

Purchase the best feed available. Cutting feed cost may be harmful to the development of the birds. Make sure the starter feed is a broiler starter and not a replacement chick starter.

1 day to 6 weeks	Broiler starter at least 22 percent protein and the added fat should be above 3 percent.
6 weeks to 10 days before show	Broiler finisher containing 18 percent protein and 3 percent or above added fat.
10 days before the show	Take 1 pound of corn gluten meal, 1 pound of cracked yellow corn and mix them with 8 pounds of the broiler finisher. Feed this ration until 3 days before show. Mix one-half cracked yellow corn and one-half finisher and feed the last 3 days before show.

The yellow corn and corn gluten meal are added to increase the fat on the birds. Contact the feed dealer at least a month before the corn gluten meal is needed so that it can be ordered.

Feed the birds at least four times each day. The more often the birds are fed the more they will eat. Each time you enter the pen the birds will stir around and eat. Keep fresh feed out for the birds at all times.

Feed moistened to crumbly consistency may be fed to broilers. This feed assists the growth of the birds because the broilers eat more of the feed. All of the wet feed should be eaten within 15 minutes. Do not put out an amount of feed that will last longer than this. If the wet feed sours and molds it will be harmful to the birds. Keep dry mash out for the birds at all times.



The use of fans during warm weather increases air movement which aids in producing well-feathered, fleshed and finished birds.

Hormones in the feed may increase the growth of the birds but should not be used when the show rules forbid their use.

### ***Ventilation***

If birds get too hot or if they get chilled, their growth will be retarded. When the birds get well feathered, the house should be open and plenty of fresh air allowed to circulate. The temperature in the house would be ideal at 55 degrees F. In hot weather it is wise to use fans to circulate the air.

During winter months keep the south side of the house open after the birds reach 4 weeks of age. Do not let the water freeze because this indicates that the temperature is too low in the house.

A house that is too warm results in poorly feathered and poorly fleshed birds, and it may cause the birds to start feather picking or cannibalism.

A range shelter with a solid floor provides good ventilation for growing broilers for show. Wire floors will cause breast blisters so the floor must be solid to hold litter. Building paper can be placed on the sides during the brooding period and gradually removed as the chicks become feathered. If a range shelter is used, it should be placed in the shade of trees during the summer months.

### ***Feather Picking and Cannibalism***

Debeak the birds if feather picking or cannibalism starts. Do this by cutting off one-

third of the upper beak with an electric de-beaker. Do not debeak the birds unless necessary.

### ***Vaccination***

If a vaccination program is used, vaccinate for Newcastle at 1-day-old by putting the vaccine in the chick's eye. At 3 weeks use a combination of bronchitis and Newcastle vaccine in the water. Fowl pox should be used only if there is considerable infection in the area. When the birds show signs of the vaccination taking effect, turn the heat up about 3 degrees F. to keep the birds comfortable while they have fever. Consult your county agricultural agent concerning the vaccination program covered in L-241, "Control Poultry Losses—A Suggested Vaccination Program for Poultry."

### ***Parasites***

Internal parasites cause poor gain and destroy the possibility of winning a broiler show. The parasites that cause the most trouble are roundworms. If worms are found in the birds, the damage already has been done. A good sanitation program must be in effect to eliminate this parasite. After each brood remove all of the litter and 1/2 inch of dirt to make sure all worm eggs are removed. Keep the old birds away from the young ones and do not walk from the chicken house to the broiler house without thoroughly cleaning the shoes.

External parasites that are most likely to attack the broilers are blue bugs, lice, mites and fleas. Check the birds often for these parasites because they lower the quality of the broiler by reducing gain and causing discolorations on the skin of the broiler.

Consult L-256, "External Parasites of Livestock and Poultry" for treatment of these parasites.

### ***Selection of Birds***

Consult L-404, "How to Select Poultry for Market Qualities" before the birds are selected for show.

### ***Fitting Birds for Show***

Broilers entered in a show should have clean legs, feet and feathers. This probably

will not influence the overall placing of the birds but it improves the appearance of the exhibit.

The feet and legs of the birds should be washed with warm water and soap to remove all dirt. Then apply sweet oil or vaseline to the legs. Do not get the oil on the feathers.

To clean the feathers, the birds must be washed in warm water and mild detergent. Suds the birds by rubbing with and not against the feathers. Rinse the bird with clear, warm water two or three times. The last rinse water may contain a small amount of bluing to bring out the white feather color. Do not use enough bluing to turn the feathers blue. All detergent must be removed or the feathers will stick together. Dry the birds with a towel and place in a clean dry coop in a warm room. Wash

the birds at least 24 hours before taking to the show.

#### ***Proper Handling and Transportation Methods***

Never place more than five birds in a coop when transporting them to the show. The coop should be large enough so that each bird will have 1 square foot of space. Put 4 inches of litter in the coop so the birds will not become bruised or the breast reddened from friction on the bottom of the coop. Be careful not to hit the birds against the coop while putting them in or taking them out.

#### ***Obey the Rules***

When growing birds for a show be sure to check the rules and follow them closely. Rules are made to improve the show conditions and it is the responsibility of the grower to carry them out.

### **POINTS TO CHECK**

#### **Before Chicks Arrive:**

1. Are the house and equipment clean?
2. Is clean litter on the floor?
3. Are feed and water available?
4. Is the brooder regulated?
5. Is the chick guard up?

**YES**

**NO**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### **After Chicks Arrive:**

1. Are the chicks comfortable?
2. Are chicks eating and drinking?
3. Are ample feed and water space available?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### **Five Weeks of Age:**

1. Are chicks well feathered?
2. Is there good ventilation?
3. Is there any feather picking?
4. Are there 4 inches of feeder space per bird?
5. Are there 2 inches of water space per bird?
6. Do the birds have any parasites?
7. Is the litter dry and soft?
8. Are the birds well fleshed?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_