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FEEDING AND CARE OF LITTLE CHICKS

By P. F. SCHOWENGERDT



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FEEDING AND CARE OF LITTLE CHICKS

By

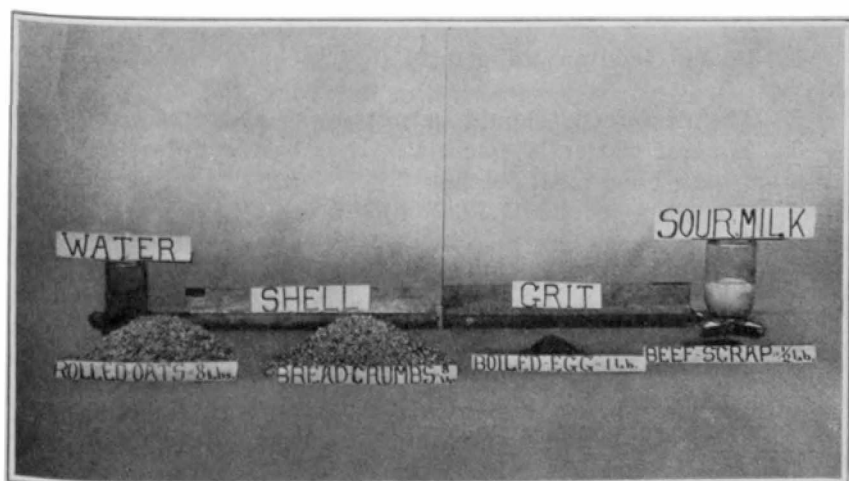
P. F. SCHOWENGERDT

The raising of little chicks in general involves two important operations. They are namely (1) the proper feeding or supplying suitable nourishment for the chick's growth, and (2) helping the chicks to fight off the attacks of parasites and disease.

FEEDING

The West Virginia Station makes the following very important statement in connection with suggestions for feeding chicks: "One of the most striking characteristics of chicks, as compared with other farm animals, is the rapidity with which they grow. A chick weighing one and one-half ounces when hatched can be made to weigh 40 ounces when twelve weeks of age. If a Holstein calf weighing 100 pounds at birth could be made to grow relatively as fast as a chick, it would weigh approximately 2,600 pounds when three months old. This extremely rapid rate of growth in the chick requires a ration liberal in quantity, easily digestible and rich in the materials necessary for building up the body of the chick."

The materials spoken of above as necessary to build up the body of the chick are *mineral matter*, *protein*, or *animal food*,



A good ration for the first week

and **water** in large quantities. Feeds which contain large amounts of mineral matter are oats, bran, bone meal and bone ash. Feeds which supply large amounts of protein or animal food are sour milk, buttermilk, beef scraps and meat meal. Where free range is allowed and an abundance of bugs and worms are present, these help materially in supplying protein.

Corn in its different forms is a feed which is sometimes the only feed fed to little chicks. This feed is most sadly lacking, not only in mineral matter, but also in protein. It is a poor feed, when fed alone, for little chicks. It should be fed in combination with such feeds as oats, bran, sour milk and beef scraps. The same is true of barley and kafir.

Sour milk is one feed which cannot be overpraised for feeding little chicks. It contains the much needed nutrients and they are in an easily digestible form. But, besides its food value, sour milk has proven to be one of our greatest aids in counteracting bacillary white diarrhoea of chicks. Experiments have proven this and even more, it will produce a more rapid growth than almost any other feed. Never fail to feed sour milk when it can be secured in any way. It should be the first drink the little chicks receive. There should not, however, be any change from sour to sweet milk.

Chicks should be fed a combination of grains and ground feed. They will do better with this combination than where either is fed alone.

The following are the requisites of a correct and complete system of feeding baby chicks:

- 1.—Do not feed anything until the chicks are 48 to 72 hours old.
- 2.—The first feeds should be nutritious and easily digested.
- 3.—Mineral matter is essential. It is best supplied by feeding bran, oats, bone meal or shell.
- 4.—Protein is needed. Sour milk is by all odds best; beef scrap and meat meal are good.
- 5.—Fresh water is needed in large quantities.
- 6.—Shell and grit should be before them at all times.
- 7.—Dry feeds are best. Give a variety. Avoid sloppy feeds.
- 8.—Feed small amounts, but feed often. The chicks have only small capacity, but don't starve them.
- 9.—Feed early in the morning and late in the evening. The night is the longest period between feeds.
- 10.—Keep the chicks busy scratching. Induce exercise and ranging.

11.—It will pay to furnish some green feed.

12.—Practice clean feeding. Use best of feeds. Keep all vessels and feeding boards clean.

13.—Make any change in the ration gradually.

14.—Study the chicks. Watch for disorders. Keep them thriving, but never overfeed.

A Good System of Feeding

First Feed

When the chicks are about 60 hours old, provide them with sour milk in a clean fountain and teach them to drink it. Sprinkle a little fine, clean sand and finely granulated charcoal on the brooder floor. This will start the secretion of the digestive juices. Follow this in an hour or two with one of the following rations:

First Week

Ration No. 1

Rolled oats, 8 lbs.
Bread crumbs, 8 lbs.
Hard boiled eggs, 2 lbs. (shell
and all chopped fine)
Sifted beef scrap, 1 lb.
Bone meal, $\frac{1}{4}$ lb.

Ration No. 2

Rolled oats, 12 lbs.
Bran, 6 lbs.
Hard boiled egg, 2 lbs.
Sifted beef scrap, 1 lb.

Ration No. 3

Corn meal, 10 lbs.
Eggs, 1 doz.
Baking soda, 1 tablespoon.
Mix with sour milk to stiff batter. Bake well.

One of the above rations should be fed five times daily on a clean brooder floor. Feed very small amounts to begin with and be sure to keep sour milk before the chicks at all times. Likewise water, fine, clean sand, charcoal and shell must be kept before the chicks constantly.

Second Week

Feed the ration used the first week, three times daily, for the morning, noon and evening meals. Never fail to keep sour milk, grit, shell, charcoal and water before the chicks.

Feed twice daily, in the middle of the morning and middle of the afternoon, a grain mixture similar to the following:

- 1 part cracked corn.
- 1 part pinhead or steel cut oats.
- 1 part of cracked wheat screenings.

Kafir, milo, cracked hullless barley, broken rice, peas or beans may be added to give variety. Where one feeds only a small number of chicks, it is probably just as good to get some good, clean, commercial chick feed. It should be free from weed seed, however. Such commercial feeds are usually a little more costly than cracked grains and contain considerable grit and shell to give weight.

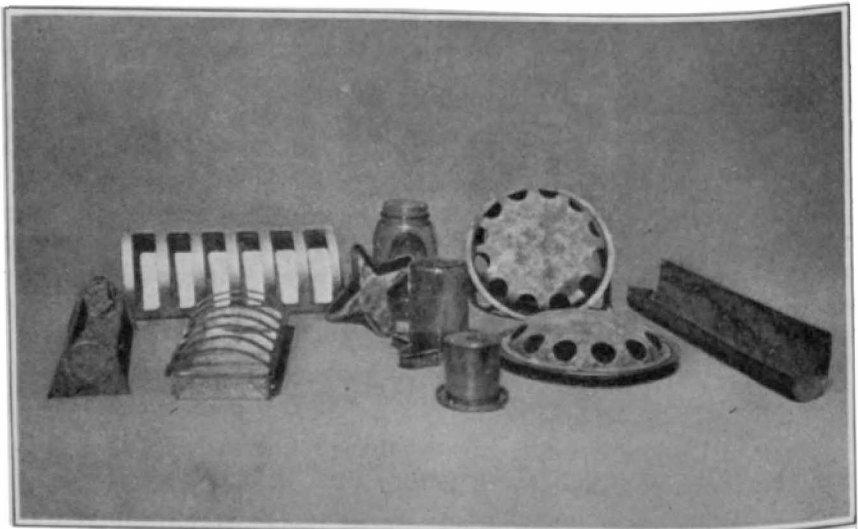
Third to Eighth Week

Feed the mixture of grains recommended for the second week, three times daily, morning, noon and night. Feed liberally but no more than the chicks will clean up each time. Let them scratch for some of the grain in a shallow litter of alfalfa leaves or cut straw.

In addition to this, keep the following dry mash before them at all times in self-feeder hoppers:

- 1 part shorts
- 1 part bran } (or 2 parts bran)
- 1 part ground corn (or sifted ground barley)
- ½ part beef scrap (or meat meal)
- ¼ part bone meal

Continue to supply them with all the sour milk, grit, shell, charcoal and fresh water they want.



Handy appliances for feeding and watering chicks

DISEASES AND PARASITES

Even tho the chicks come from strong, vigorous stock, are successfully hatched, carefully brooded and properly fed, success is still not assured. They are subject to attacks of numerous parasites and diseases. We must help the chicks fight off the attacks of their enemies. Prevention is the best means. Always prevent by eliminating the causes.

Some of the Causes of Diseases of Chicks

- 1.—Crowding of chicks.
- 2.—Dampness, drafts and lack of ventilation and sunshine in the quarters.
- 3.—Unsanitary surroundings.
- 4.—Damaged, musty and moldy feeds, sloppy or fermented mash. Impure water or filthy drinking vessels.
- 5.—The presence of parasites.
- 6.—Overfeeding.
- 7.—Contact with other birds which are diseased.
- 8.—Inherited disease or weak constitution.

How to Destroy Mites and Lice

Keep the brooder, coops and houses thoroughly cleaned. Spray or paint frequently the entire inner surfaces with a 5 percent solution of cresol or creolin. This will free the premises of mites. In applying this, however, care must be taken to literally flood all cracks and crevices with the solution. If the mites are once established, it will be necessary to repeat the spraying in 14 days to kill the nits which will have hatched out in the meantime.

Dust the hens frequently with some good insect powder, as Persian insect powder. This will kill body lice. The following is a good, effective louse powder which can be made at home:

Mix 3 parts of gasoline with 1 part of crude carbolic acid (90 percent strength). If this strength of acid cannot be secured use in its place 1 part of creolin or cresol. Mix these liquids carefully and add to them while constantly stirring enough plaster of paris to just soak up the liquid. Time should be taken to mix this thoroughly. Spread the powder out in a thin layer to dry. Use a tin can with holes in the top to shake the powder into the feathers of the birds and work it down next to the skin.

Lard, to which has been added a few drops of coal oil, if rubbed on the head, under the wings and just beneath the vent, of the chicks and hen, will also rid them of body lice.

NEBRASKA AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

The following mixture in the same way is even more effective:

12 teaspoonsful of olive oil or cottonseed oil

3 teaspoonsful of kerosene (coal oil)

20 drops of (refined) carbolic acid

It is often just as well to carefully grease the breast and body and under the wings of the mother hen and let the chicks grease themselves by hovering under the hen.

