

# A Cheap Brooder For Fifty Chicks

Clemson Poultry Specialist Advises Inexpensive, Home-made Outfit For Small Number of Chicks

By A. B. BRYAN

FOR those who want to brood a small number of chicks with less trouble and little mortality of chicks, P. H. Gooding, extension poultry specialist at Clemson College, suggests a simple, inexpensive, home-made brooder that will care for 25 to 50 chicks.

There are, Mr. Gooding believes, three groups who will doubtless welcome such a brooder: (1) those who buy 25 to 50 chicks and try to brood them in old boxes or other improvised brooders; (2) those who buy one to two dozen baby chicks and depend on brooding hens to take care of the chicks; (3) those who hatch chicks with hens and let the hens carry them until weaning age.

Regarding the demonstrations so far conducted with the little home-made outfit, Mr. Gooding says:

"These indicate that this is a most successful way of brooding a small number of chicks and it certainly does reduce the labor in looking after them."

### The Essential Materials

Here are the materials needed for the simple 50-chick brooder to which Mr. Gooding refers:

1. A 3x6 foot frame, 2 feet high, built of light material—1x3 in. planks.
2. Enough one-half-inch mesh wire to go around the sides and the top.
3. A piece of three-fourths-inch mesh wire, 3 x 6 feet for the bottom of the cage. One-half-inch mesh will do.
4. An old No. 3 tin tub with a hole in the bottom.
5. A kerosene lantern.
6. Three bricks.
7. Three or four wide boards about two feet long to cover the bottom of the cage just beneath the tub.
8. Enough crocus bags or old quilts to cover the tub and close up most of the space between the bottom of the tub and the floor of the brooding cage.

### How to Build the Brooder

The following directions are given as a guide in the construction of the brooder:

A 3x6 foot cage is constructed as shown in Figure 1. The bottom is made from three-fourths-inch mesh hardware cloth so that the droppings will fall through easily. The sides and the top are made from one-half-inch mesh wire. One-inch mesh wire may be used, but if this is used, it will be necessary to put a 1x6 inch board around the bottom of the cage for the first few days to prevent the smaller chicks from getting out.

The 1x6 inch planks, shown in Figure 2, are placed in one end of the brooder. Three nails are placed in the center board with one of the nails bent in such a way that the lantern can be placed against two of the nails and the third one twisted around to hold the lantern

in place. Newspapers placed over the boards keep them clean. These will also help to keep the chicks warm and may be removed each day. The three bricks are then placed so that the tub will rest on them, leaving an opening to the front. It is necessary that the tub have a small hole in it to let out fumes from the lantern. (A box may be used instead of the tub but this would increase the danger from fire should the lantern blaze up.) The crocus bags are tucked around the back and sides and over the top of the tub to hold the heat in.



Figure No. 1

Mr. Gooding believes that when a good or new lantern is used and the wick is trimmed each day, there is not any more danger of fire than in using any other kind of oil brooder. If electricity is available and a wire can conveniently be run to the brooding cage, he suggests a 40-watt bulb instead of a lantern. If the weather is extremely cold and the chicks are young, it will be necessary to use a larger bulb.

As to the location of the brooder, Mr. Gooding suggests any convenient place protected from wind and rain—a fairly tight wash shed, wood shed, or garage.

### Operating the Brooder

In operating a brooder of this kind, Mr. Gooding advises that it be observed closely for the first day or two to see if the chicks are kept comfortable and to learn how to adjust the lantern and the bags around the tub to keep the right temperature. If a sufficient opening is left on the side of the tub where the feed hoppers and water fountains are and the chicks are going in and out, it is evident that the temperature is about right. On the other hand, if the chicks are hovering under the tub and chirping, it is a good indication that they are cold and that the lantern should be turned higher and more bags tucked around and paced over the top of the tub.

Other than feeding and watering the chicks such a brooder requires very little attention. A good practice is to remove the tub about 4 p. m., replace the soiled papers with new ones, trim the wick, refill the lantern and replace it. One filling a day is all that is necessary. If this is done about 4 p. m., the brooder will have ample time to warm up before night.

If one has a brooder thermometer on hand it would be wise to check the temperature of the brooder before placing the chicks in it. This could be done by lighting the lantern and placing the thermometer under the edge of the tub about two inches above the floor of the brooder. Enough sacks could then be placed over the tub and around the sides to bring the temperature up to 95 to 100 degrees, depending on the age of the chicks and the outside temperature.



Figure No. 2

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