

The Importance of the Brooding Period

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Several developmental and physiological processes occur during the important and sensitive brooding period of chickens, which is the first 7 days of a chicken's life. The chicken seems anatomically complete at hatch, but the thermoregulatory, gastro-intestinal and immune system need further development and maturation.

Optimal brooding is essential to optimize animal health and contributes to a good performance and survival in later life. The most important brooding condition to control is the body temperature because chickens are unable to regulate their body temperature posthatch. Secondly, feed intake is important and stimulates both intestinal and immunological development. To optimize the brooding period, brooding systems are developed by the industry,

such as the HatchBrood system. In the HatchBrood system, brooding conditions are optimized for the first days of a chicken's life. Understanding the specific requirements of posthatch birds and subsequently adjust the brooding conditions is important to improve performance, animal health and welfare.

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