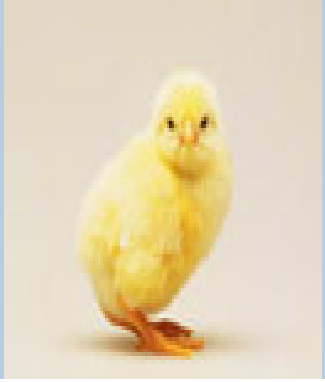

Working for Farmers' Success

Nutrition Excellence!

March 2010

A sure sign of spring is the arrival of baby chicks! Have you thought how much fun it would be to raise your own chicks either for meat or for your own eggs? Provided in this newsletter are some basic ideas of what you need to know to get started raising your own flock.

You can purchase day-old chicks from reputable hatcheries. WFS primarily uses and recommends Welps and Hoover. You will generally get straight-run chicks (a mix of males and females), though you may have the option of purchasing either sex for an additional cost.

Chicks can be brooded and raised in a variety of housing types. Primary requirements are that the housing is warm, dry, and ventilated, but not drafty. It should also be easy to clean. While small numbers of chicks can be warmed adequately with heat lamps placed about 20 inches above the litter surface, a larger group of birds in a large room such as a shed or a garage should have a supplemental heat source such as a brooder stove when chicks are present. Chicks should not be housed with older birds, as the mature birds may pass diseases and parasites to the young chicks. Several days before the chicks arrive, thoroughly clean and disinfect the brooder house and any equipment the chicks will be using. Doing this several days ahead of arrival allows everything to dry completely. Dampness is a mortal enemy to chicks, resulting in chilling and encouraging disease such as coccidiosis. When the premises are dry, place four to six inches of dry litter material (wood shavings or a commercial absorbent litter material are good) on the floor.

Adjust the brooder stove and/or heat lamps 24 hours before the chicks arrive so that there is a comfort zone that is 90°F at the level of the chicks upon their arrival

Use a brooder guard (a plastic, cardboard or wire barrier) for a few days to encircle the brooding area so the chicks don't wander too far from the warmth. Once the chicks have learned where the heat is, remove or expand the guard. The temperature can be gradually reduced by 5°F per week to a minimum of 55°F.

You should have one 1-quart waterer per 25 chicks. Use fresh, cool (not cold) water, and be sure to clean and replenish daily. Dip beaks of the chicks to induce drinking. Elevate waterer after first week to reduce contamination from litter. Waterer should not be higher than the chick's back. Double waterer capacity at 6 weeks.

Be sure to store feed in metal containers such as big garbage cans to avoid attracting rats, mice, raccoons, etc. This will reduce a predators' desire to invade your birds home area.

WFS has an excellent line of poultry feeds called Fancy Feathers. In the chick program, WFS has a 2-stage feeding program designed to produce healthy, fast growing birds.

Start off your baby chicks on Chick Starter with 24% protein. One baby chick will eat 2.5 pounds of chick starter before moving onto the next feed, Chick Developer with 20% protein. Both feeds are medicated with Amprolium for Coccidiosis and Bacitracin Methylene Disalicylate for growth and feed efficiency.

Chicks can eat the Chick Developer until market weight is reached. If you wish to switch to a non-medicated feed, you can start your chicks on Conditioner/Breeder at 6 weeks of age.

Many of our WFS locations are willing to help you purchase baby chicks and get you started. Please contact one of our locations to purchase your baby chicks and your chicken feed.

You can also find a lot of resources on the web. Try www.backyardchickens.com or www.livingthecountrylife.com

For more information about the WFS Fancy Feathers poultry line, contact a WFS location or check us out at www.wfsag.com.

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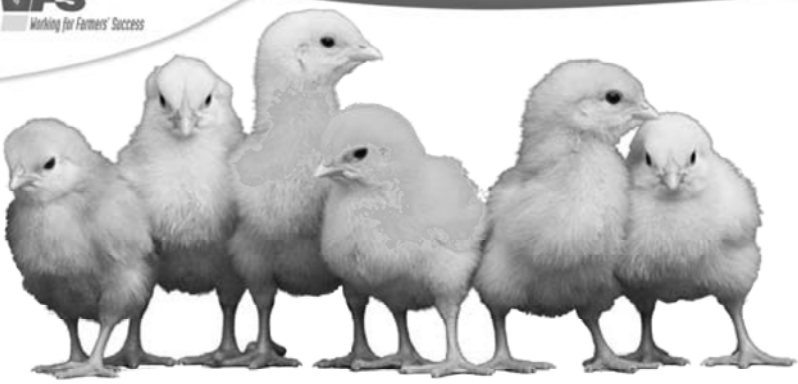

Spring is in the air and baby chicks will soon be hatching.

Place your order today for spring delivery of:

California White	Production Red	Barred Rock
Gold Star	Black Sex Link	Black Australorp
Buff Orphington		Silver Laced Wyandottes
White Rocks	White Leghorn	Araucana/Americana
(brown egg layers)	(white egg layers)	(colored egg layers)

Also available are:

Bantams	Ducklings	Goslings
Pheasants	Turkeys (white and bronze)	Cornish Cross Broilers (best seller)

Regular Season Delivery Dates:

March 25	April 8	April 22	May 6
May 20	June 3	June 17	July 1

ORDER YOUR CHICKS TODAY!

Blue Earth	Mapleton	Wells
507-526-3211	507-524-3130	507-553-3142

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50¢ OFF

your first purchase of

WFS Chick Starter

50¢ *Working for Farmers' Success* 50¢