

## **RIVERTOWN CHICK CARE SHEET FOR POULTRY/GAMEBIRDS**

Rivertown's poultry, duck and gamebird season starts in the Spring and ends in Fall. Rivertown carries the following birds: Ameraucanas, Bantams, Araucanas, Cochins, Rhode Island Reds, Silkies, Khaki Campbell ducks, Peacocks, Guinea hens, and many other species of poultry, ducks, geese and gamebirds.

### **Essential Care Items**

You need the correct containers for chick starter mash, grit and water. For housing your chicks you can use a commercial poultry brooder or make one out of a wooden or cardboard box, using a screen for the top. You will need this for the first six weeks of your chicks life. Most people use a 250-watt bulb for heating the homemade brooders. Due to the threat of accidental fires it is important to be very careful when using a 250-watt bulb to heat a homemade brooder.

### **Living with Poultry and Ducks**

Chickens and ducks can live anywhere from 5-10 years depending on the quality of the life provided. Most hens stop laying eggs around three years of age. Your new chicken or duck will require a lot of care in the first four weeks. After four weeks of age they can move from their baby box to their adult cage. Be sure to check if these pets are legal in your city. This caresheet covers only basic care guidelines. Please ask your Rivertown staff member for more information.

### **Housing**

For the first four weeks provide a draft free shallow wooden box with a screened lid. For maximum comfort, line the box with pine shavings about one inch deep. This should be changed daily or as needed when wet. Warmth is the key to keeping your chicken or duck happy and healthy. Temperatures should be at 90-95 degrees for the first week and lowered by 5 degrees each week until they are six weeks old. The temperature should be controlled by a 250-watt bulb hung over the screened lid at 18 inches above the lid. Chicks will hover near the heat source if they are too cold, and will move away from the heat source if they are too hot. By the time that your chicks are four weeks old they will no longer need the warmth provided by a bulb. They are now ready to roam around outside have access to their safe haven, whether it is a store-bought cage with sleeping quarters, a chicken coop, or some other time of homemade poultry habitat. Keep your chicken or duck in their new sleeping quarters (preferably with a door) at night away from drafts and predators. Your cage can be made out of poultry mesh or wire, but be sure that ½ the cage has a solid floor for protecting their feet (a piece of wood works well).

### **Feeding your Baby Chick**

While your young chicks need to be fed chick starter mash, your older chickens can be fed either one type of poultry mix, or a combination of any of Rivertown's chicken pellets, crumbles, mashes or scratch. Rivertown also carries a organic poultry feed that is popular with many of our customers. When bringing home a new chicken or duck they will be stressed from the move and

from being handled. They can at this time exhibit signs of dehydration and weakness. To reduce the amount of stress that your new chick is feeling you can dip their beaks gently in water it help them find their water bowl faster. For quick energy, try adding a small amount of sugar to their bowl of water. You can also add vitamins to their water.