

## Quick Operation guide for Incubating & Hatching Chicken Eggs.

This guide is based upon the use of a modern incubator using micro-computer technology, and one that can accurately achieve the settings you have entered. Using properly stored eggs from healthy stock you should be able to achieve a hatch rate average in excess of 80%.

*The humidity settings below are guide for average UK conditions to achieve a weight loss of 15 – 17% during the hatching period. **Test-weigh a tray of the eggs for at least the first 10 days to check weight loss.** The humidity in the middle period could range from 50-65%RH, depending upon the breed, for example, thick shelled eggs from say Marans will need a very much lower humidity than other breeds.*

### **Days 1 – 3**

Set the incubator temperature to 38.0<sup>0</sup> C, and the humidity setting to 60/65%RH. Allow several hours before loading with room temperature eggs. Set the trays in the incubator to turning mode – a turning period of 20 minutes every 2 hours is generally the best (you can leave this until day 4). Check the water supply is connected.

### **Days 4 – 7**

Reduce the humidity setting to 55/60%RH. Leave the temperature at 38.0<sup>0</sup> C. Check the water level is OK.

### **Days 8 - 11**

Reduce the temperature setting to 37.7<sup>0</sup> C. Reduce the humidity setting to 53/55%RH. If your incubator has a cooling facility, set it to operate for 45 minutes cooling per day. If it does not have a cooling facility, then once per day, turn the power to the machine off and open the incubator door slightly for a period of 20 minutes, then close door and turn power back on. Again, check the water level.

### **Days 12 – 17**

Reduce the temperature setting to 37.6<sup>0</sup> C. Leave the humidity setting at 53/55%RH. Again, check the water level. Continue cooling operation once per day. Open air vents **slightly** to increase oxygen and decrease carbon dioxide whilst maintaining humidity and temperature settings.

### **Days 18 – 19**

Cease cooling operation.

Level the turning trays and **switch off the turning mechanism**. Remove all eggs from the egg trays and transfer them to the hatching baskets. Reduce the temperature setting to 37.5<sup>0</sup> C. Increase the humidity setting to 65%RH. Open air vents a **little** more to further increase oxygen and decrease carbon dioxide and maintain humidity and temperature settings.

### **Days 20 – 21**

Increase the humidity setting to 70% RH or higher & temperature 37.5<sup>0</sup> C. Air vents open but maintain humidity and temperature settings.

**Do not open the door during the final 2 days**, wait until all chicks have hatched, even if it takes longer than the 21 days.

*If you are using a cycle system with different age batches of eggs at the same time, a constant temperature of 37.6<sup>0</sup> C and humidity 53/55% RH is fine for chicken eggs.*

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