

Raising Baby Ducks & Geese

Ducklings and Goslings are fairly easy to raise, if you follow a few simple steps. The most important thing that many people do not know is that ducks and geese should NEVER have medicated feed. The best thing to feed Ducklings and Goslings is a 21% "non medicated" starter feed. Grange Co-op offers Rogue Game Bird Feed (25RGBF-50RGBF). It is also a good idea to put a vitamin and electrolyte powder in the water to give them a good start. Ducks and Geese drink a good deal more water than chickens.

Ducklings and Goslings do not take heat well, so be sure not to overheat them. They like a temperature of 90-92 degrees for the first 3 days, then 85-90 degrees for days 4 to 7. Thereafter, drop the temperature by approximately 5 degrees per week until they are fully feathered. They must always be able to get away from the heat. Panting and drooping wings are a sign that they are too hot. Once they leave the brooder, it is a good idea to give them a heat lamp at night for the first week or so, unless the weather is very hot. Always make sure they have some shelter and a place to get out of the sun.

Ducklings and Goslings like their feed wet, and adding a little water to the feed (so it is somewhat soupy) helps to keep them from choking.

They will also appreciate fresh greens daily, and bugs and meal worms are a special treat. Sprinkle finely chopped greens in their water to keep them fresh and clean, as they will not eat dirty or wilted feed.

Be sure to always have clean, fresh water available. It should be deep enough to get their heads submerged, to clean out their nostrils and prevent them from getting a condition called "sticky eye", but they should not be able to get their bodies into the water. Duck and Goose feathers are waterproof because they oil them, and young Ducklings and Goslings cannot produce oil until they are several weeks old. When their mother raises them, she will oil their feathers for them, so they can go into the water at an earlier age than when they are artificially brooded.

Ducklings and Goslings can have a chick waterer for the first week or two, and then they should have something deeper. Use a plastic bowl with 2" chicken wire over the top, so they can get their heads in but can't get into the bowl. The water will need to be changed often, as ducks and geese are dabblers and will get feed into their water constantly. Once they are fully feathered, they will appreciate some

swimming water. Always make sure they can get out of the water, or they will drown. A ramp into and out of the swimming pool is a good idea, until they are large enough to get out on their own.

Ducklings and Goslings make quite a mess when eating, and their droppings are prolific and wet. They must be kept clean and dry, so change bedding often. Pine shavings make good bedding for Ducklings and Goslings. You can also raise them on wire mesh.

Use the 21% starter feed for the first 6 weeks or so. Grange Co-op offers Rogue Game Bird Feed (25RGBF-50RGBF) or Rogue Organic Poultry Starter (25ROPS-50ROPS). Then gradually change them over to a 17-18% ration. Grange Co-op offers Rogue All-In-One (25AIO-50AIO). Don't feed layer pellets until they are ready to lay as the calcium content is too high for growing birds. Grange Co-op offers Rogue Egg Pellets (25EP-50EP). Once they begin laying, layer pellets are fine, and they should have free access to oyster shell and grit. Again, always make sure they have plenty of fresh, clean water.

