Brooding: The 5 Essentials

By providing chicks with the right environment and nutrition during the brooding period – the first 14 days of a bird’s life – hatcheries can optimize the flock’s overall performance, and maximize profit. The top five management best practices are equally weighted in importance:

- **Temperature Management**
  
  Because of their high surface-to-body mass ratio, chicks lose heat very quickly. Maintaining the proper ambient temperature ensures chicks stay healthy and reach their full weight potential.

- **Clean Water**
  
  Water is an essential nutrient that impacts virtually all functions. Providing enough clean water during brooding directly affects the chick’s long-term growth.

- **Fresh Air**
  
  Modern broilers require high levels of oxygen. Proper ventilation is key to maintaining good air quality throughout the house and distributing heat.

- **High Light Intensity**
  
  Bright light during the first 5-7 days helps stimulate activity in chicks, which encourages feed consumption and overall system development.

- **Access to Feed**
  
  Immediate access to clean, fresh feed is essential – chicks should never have to search for their next meal.