

Common problems with managing curtain sided houses can be specified as follows:

- Difficult to keep the floor warm for brooding all the time
- Difficult to maintain temperature during ventilation
- Difficult to prevent cold air from falling onto chicks

How are we going to minimize or overcome these hurdles in open sided houses?

- Seal the house
- Insulate the roof
- Review your heating system
- Install curtains correctly

To summarize:

It is important that the farmer maintains a proper environment for the birds to grow without any stress by managing the temperature and ventilation during winter.

In the winter period evaluate your pre-heating (minimum 24 hours ) particularly the brooder floor area, insulation of the houses, curtain management (24 hour good ventilation), sufficient heat source (add extra brooders) to achieve maximum returns from broiler production.



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# WINTER BROODING



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Brooding is the most important period of a broiler chicks life and that will usually be 1-14 days. Farmers must pay more attention to the brooding chicks in this period to achieve the following aims:-

- To accelerate growth rate
- Enhance cardiovascular growth
- Develop feed and water intake
- Enhance the health condition of the bird
- Minimize stress

The adverse weather conditions in the winter period make the farmers job harder during the breeding period and damage done in the brooding period will not appear until later in life. Paying more attention in the early phase of the bird's life is very important as an early stressed bird will not have adequate time in production to catch up.

Usually the winter period in Zambia is over three months and the following weather conditions can be expected:-

- Low temperature
- Windy
- Dry and low humidity

The biggest challenge in the winter is to maintain the brooding temperatures. Poor curtain quality in open sided houses makes controlling of temperature extremely difficult. Failing to regulate the correct temperatures in the brooder will result in:-

- Increased mortalities
- Increased vaccine reactions
- Ascites
- Non starters
- Dehydration

It is very important to realize the cost of heating will be higher in the winter. A common problem observed in the field is that most farmers reduce ventilation in the brooder to reduce high heating costs during the winter. Poor ventilation in the brooder causes poor growth at the beginning of the birds life (maximum internal development occurs

at the beginning of the birds life). Poor initial growth of the bird will lead to poor production in the later part of the production cycle. Predominantly Ascites is caused in poor ventilated broiler houses. Farmers must increase heating in winter and maintain adequate ventilation to ensure that the birds develop correctly to achieve their genetic potential. The conditions observed in poorly ventilated broiler houses are as follows:

- Poor air quality due to high amount of gases—e.g Carbon Dioxide and Carbon Monoxide etc.
- Low Oxygen levels in the brooder.

Proper ventilation will help the exchange of air in the brooder , maintain the correct amount of oxygen to the birds and hence the removal of harmful gases from the brooder.

It is important to understand the principles of ventilation in the winter.

The cardinal rule is the temperature should not be compromised because of ventilation. Birds should not get cold or chilled by a draft of cold air.