

## Rocklands Farm Chick Rental

### What are program is all about:

Thank you for adopting chicks from Rocklands Farm. We hope this next week will be a joy for both you and your family. This program was created for your family and others to better understand the preciousness of life, gain a deeper reverence for where our food comes from, and share in the stewardship of raising chickens.

You are renting our young chicks, which means we expect the same care and mindfulness as we would give, as well as a safe return of the chicks. These chicks are fragile and require monitoring at least twice a day, preferably three to four. **They also need consistent temperature of 85 - 90 degrees, fresh water and plenty of feed.**

We encourage you to enjoy them, play with them, maybe even give them some "scratch" (a farm term for small pieces of food, like crushed Cheerios, spread across the ground for them to forage for). Just make sure an adult is keeping an eye on everyone- falling, squeezing, or tossing could really hurt them.

### Rental program terms:

Your rental period is one week, starting the day of pick-up, Saturday, May 7th. **Please return the chicks between 11am and 3pm on Saturday, May 14th.**

You have plenty of feed for your rental period. We've also included a bag of fresh bedding to be sprinkled on top of the soiled bedding halfway through your rental period. Though we hope these instructions will help lessen the probability of accidents we understand that mistakes can happen and there a small possibility of a chick dying of natural causes. Be prepared to explain this to your children if something was to happen, however, there is no penalty for the loss of the chicks.

If a chick does seem sick or is having trouble moving, refer to the FAQ page for information. If the problem persists, please email [Greg@RocklandsFarmMD.com](mailto:Greg@RocklandsFarmMD.com).

### What comes with the Rental Program:

- One "peep" box with pine-shaving bedding;
- Two "peeps";
- One bag of feed, sufficient for their entire rental period;
- Two red bowls, one for feed and one for water;
- This letter, with Care Instructions, and your contract invoice.

Again, we hope that you enjoy this time with your chick and thank you for being a part of Rocklands Farm.

Sincerely,  
Greg Glenn, Farm & Livestock Manger & the Rocklands Farm Staff

**Rocklands Farm**  
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\*\*If you are considering the cost, we believe ours is quite reasonable at \$2.15 per chick, per day. This includes the feed, feeding materials, bedding, living quarters, and most importantly, a place they can go when they grow out of their cuteness.

If you go to a store, you may pay \$3.50 a chick, along with all your needed materials, which could cost you up to \$50 for the first few weeks. Once they are older than one week, they become loud & stinky, and require a bigger coop, much more feed, a larger feeder & water dispenser.

If you're prepared to tackle backyard chickens, we encourage you to do so, and are happy to be a resource on how to take on such an endeavor. If not, we hope you will enjoy our chick rental, and enjoy all the benefits of baby chicks, but none of the hassle.

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### Baby Chick Care Instructions:

- **Location:** Find a safe, warm place to keep your chicks while they live at your house. It should be away from where your pets could get to them, usually a laundry room, walk in closet, or secured in a bedroom works best.
- **Temperature:** Set a desk lamp about a 6 to 10 inches above the box floor, through the flap in the top of the box (cut accordingly if more room is needed). **Don't use a halogen, high heat, or 70+ watt bulb, it may be a fire hazard.** Chicks need an average temperature of 85-90 degrees. You can use a thermometer, or monitor their behavior over the next few hours and after the first night. **If they huddle under the light, it should be closer, if they huddle away from the light, it should be higher up.**
- **Food & Water:** Chicks need food and water at all times. They will be sloppy with their food and water, so checking twice a day and refilling when needed is a must. Place each dish in the center of their box (this allows open space for them to huddle under the lamp or away in a corner). They might walk in either dish, this is ok. If they make a big mess, simply wash out the dish and refill it.
- **Daily Care:** The chicks should be checked 3 to 4 times a day (two if you are desperately busy; if so, leave them extra food and water and be sure the temperature is stabilized). Take note of where they're resting (close to the light or far from it), and adjust accordingly. Be sure their food and water dishes are full and clean. If you notice the bedding to be quite soiled or damp, simply sprinkle the extra bedding we provide on top of the old bedding. You can return the box and bedding upon return and we'll compost it.
- **Enjoyment:** We hope you will enjoy your time with them by playing with them often and gently. Remember, they are babies (4 days old), so we recommend short durations of play time (5 to 10 minutes) to keep them happy and safe. After playing with your chicks put them back in their box so they can get warm and have food and water. They should be played with in a safe location (away from pets and small places to hide under). On hardwood floors in a sunny room or out on the grass is best (They love the outdoors).
- **Natural Instincts:** Chicks love playing outside and pecking at little things. It is ok for them to taste things and peck around. They will chirp a lot if something is wrong or if they're worried; if you hear them making a lot noise, check their heat, food, and water.
- **Injury or Death:** We hope you will care for the chicks the same way we would. There is no penalty if a chick passes away. Simply bury it or dispose of it in some fashion. Please help your children understand the process of life and death, so that life can be better celebrated, respected and protected.

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### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):

- **What materials are provided to me?** Two baby chicks, a living box suitable for their growth during their stay (including bedding), a bag of chick feed sufficient for the week-long period, a bag of extra bedding (in case their bedding becomes soiled).
- **What materials do I need, beyond what was provided to me?** A common desk lamp with a 40 to 60 watt bulb (**don't use a halogen, high heat, or 70+ watt bulb**). Set the light bulb 6 to 10 inches above the box bedding and secure the opening of the box top 2 to 4 inches from the light to prevent a fire hazard. A thermometer will help you maintain an appropriate temperature (it can be purchased from any local hardware store).
- **Where is the best place to store them and their box?** A bathroom, bedroom, closet, or laundry room are best. Find a room that has a consistently warm temperature, can be secured from pets, kids, and a falling box.
- **How often should they be checked?** 3 to 4 times a day.
- **What Temperature range do my chicks need?** 85 to 90 degrees
- **What should I do if it is too hot or cold in the box?** Adjust the lamp height (If the chicks huddle under the lamp, it's too cold in the box and if they huddle in the corner, it's too hot), or add or remove the box flap to help keep more heat in or out.
- **What should I do if the chicks will not eat or drink?** They naturally know how to eat and drink, give them time to figure it out. You can try to hand feed them if they still won't eat after the first six hours. Simply hold them close to the food or water until they recognize what it is and start consuming it. If the problem persists, email Greg at [Greg@RocklandsFarmMD.com](mailto:Greg@RocklandsFarmMD.com).
- **What should I do if I run out of food?** You are given a bag of feed that should be sufficient for their stay (1 week supply). If you find you still ran out, either feed them crushed Cheerios, or Email us and we can give you more feed, but you'll have to arrange a time to come to the farm and get it.
- **What should I do if the chicks continually make a mess of their food and water?**  
Try putting the lids to the side of the box where they may run less, or near the lamp or corner, opposite of where they often rest.
- **What should I do if their bedding gets wet or soiled?** There shouldn't be a problem with only two chicks, but if you find it to be wet, simply sprinkle more on from the bag we provide. If you find it to be too soiled, simply remove the soiled bedding and replace with the entire supply we provide. Newspaper can be placed under the box as well.
- **What happens if my chick gets sick, can't walk or dies?** A very small

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percentage of chicks have problems, such as bowed legs, stunted growth, or a birth defect. This is part of the natural breeding process and losses are part of the farm operation. We hope it won't cause too much sadness in your home, but it's part of life worth understanding. Simply let us know if something is wrong or a chick death, and we will replace your chick with one of ours (You will have to come out to the farm). Only contact us if you are desperate, they often recover from illness.

- **What kind of handling can chicks take?** Chicks are baby animals. They should be cared for, held, and played with carefully and gently. They are great to play with, but only for short durations of time (5 to 10 minutes). If someone is mishandling them, we hope the chick can be returned to the box, and that person can learn to handle more gently.
- **What happens if a chick gets hurt while being played with?** Simply return the chick to the box, keep it warm, and be sure it eats and drinks. They are fairly resilient and should come back to normal shortly. If an injury persists, you can email Greg at [Greg@RocklandsFarmMD.com](mailto:Greg@RocklandsFarmMD.com).
- **What breed of chicken are these chicks?** These chicks are a standard breed called "Cornish-Cross", and are commonly found wherever chicken is sold. Even though these are fast-growing, reaching full maturity and weight at 6 to 7 weeks, we believe raising them on pasture and with GMO-Free feed is a healthy alternative for these birds. This is our first year working with this breed and we're excited to see how they do on pasture.
- **What happens to them when they come back to the farm?** They will live one week inside a brooder, a giant version of your box, with heat, feed and water and all their friends. Then, once their feathers come in, they will live on pasture for the remainder of their life, freely foraging grass, bugs, and their feed.
- **Where does my food come from?** We hope you will come to Rocklands Farm to enjoy fresh, local, and sustainable raised food. Unfortunately, we won't be selling chicken to the public this year, but we hope to in the future. Come visit us for a tour.
- **What is Rocklands all about?** Our mission is "Through Holistic Agriculture, Rocklands Farm **Feeds, Nourishes, and Engages** the local community. We care deeply about the health of the soil, since you are what you eat - eats. We pasture-raise our livestock, with frequent rotations and integrate our various species symbiotically.

Our garden yields diverse, nutrient dense produce seasonally. We also make wine, the majority of which are made with locally sourced grapes. We have a CSA for our meats and produce, as well as a Cellar Club for our wine. Our on-farm market offers a great place to also get our meat. We host tours of our operation, and rent our farm for various events. See our website for more details at [RocklandsFarmMD.com](http://RocklandsFarmMD.com).

More about our rental program:

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Generally less than 2% of each batch of chicks passes away during the first week of life, mainly due to natural causes. If one or both of your chicks becomes ill (runny nose, coughing, not eating), has trouble walking, or isn't running around like a mouse, let us know. If one or both of the chicks pass away, please dispose of them (this is a good opportunity to teach about life and death, maybe you can have a ceremony). There is no refund if a chick becomes ill or passes away. There is no additional fee either, though we hope you'll do your best to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

These boxes are yours. We would love for you to decorate your boxes, make up stories about your chick's adventures, and be sure to tell us what you named your chicks. We would love to see any pictures you drew or stories you wrote about your chicks.

If you do not want your box anymore, we are happy to dispose of it, and the bedding, for you. We ask that you return feed & water dishes.

When you return on Saturday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, we ask that you arrive between 10am and 3pm. We will place your chicks back with their friends at the drop site (same place you picked up), and at the end of the day we will move them all out to our barn.

We have a large, heated brooder (our chick hotel), where they will grow up for another three weeks. Once they've grown to 4 weeks of age, we place them on pasture in groups of 60 - 75, where they free-range until they are 12 weeks old. They roam, forage, hunt for bugs, and lounge in the sun in their pasture pens. We move the pens daily to ensure they have fresh ground to live on and eat from.

At 12 weeks, we process the birds and package them for sale. We hope you would come out this summer or fall and purchase one. It's quite possibly the best, healthiest, most well raised chicken you'll have. And what's more, you helped be a part of raising it.

Again, thank you for participating in our chick rental program. We hope this is an enriching and joyful experience for you, your family and your friends.

The purpose of this rental is to: provide an opportunity to enjoy chicks during the Spring Season, teach the responsibilities of caring for baby livestock, gain a greater appreciation for the preciousness of life, grow a deeper reverence for where our food comes from.

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