

Hatching Problems

Occasionally, when hatching, things can go wrong. It may be only a couple of eggs or it may be the whole setting. Generally major disasters are caused by incubator problems or power failure. Regular hatchers look for trends in failures to overcome problems and improve future hatching rates.

The following are the more common failures and the reasons behind them.

1. Exploding Eggs

- Dirty eggs
- Cracked eggs

2. Eggs Clear

No blood rings
or Embryo growth

- No rooster
- Too many hens per rooster
- Poorly performing rooster
- Eggs stored too long before setting
- Poor storage conditions (hot, cold, not turned)

3. Eggs Clear

With blood rings
and/or small embryo
growth

- Poor storage conditions
- Incubator temp. too high

4. Early Embryo Deaths

- Incubator temp. too high
- Unsatisfactory egg turning
- Insufficient ventilation
- Genetic characteristics of laying stock
- Poor laying stock (poorly managed)

5. Dead Embryos

Before hatching

- Unsatisfactory egg turning
- Poor ventilation
- Incorrect temp. control (too high or too low)
- Low humidity

6. Eggs Pipped

But not hatched

- Low average humidity
- Low humidity at hatching
- Excessive movement of eggs in last three days causing malpositioned chick
- Low average temp.

7. Early Hatching

With bloody navels

- Temp. too high

8. Late Hatching

- Temp. too low
- Stored too long or incorrectly prior to setting

9(a) Sticky Chicks

May be covered
with egg fluids

- Low temp.
- High humidity

9(b) Sticky Chicks

Shell & membrane
sticking to chick

- Low humidity during hatching

10. Crippled & Malformed

- High average temp.
- Poor laying stock
- Genetic defects

References:

"Incubation Troubleshooting Chart" – Mississippi State University Extension Service
"Incubation and Chick Rearing" - J Finger
"Hatching & Brooding Small Numbers of Chicks"- Melvin L Hamre
"Hatching Eggs in the Classroom" - Texas Agricultural Extension Service