

Merchandising Matters!

We all appreciate the importance of merchandising each time we walk into our favorite store or see seasonal displays like seed and gardening utensils or live chick displays during chick days. Retail merchandising efforts draw in customers by creating visual interest.



It makes customers feel a certain way about your brand and helps them incorporate the brand or product into their lifestyle. Merchandising is *having the right products, in the right place, at the right time*. Merchandising specifically for a seasonal event like chick days is important for farm retailers. After all, chicks are the beginning of a long relationship with customers. Merchandising well helps your store become a destination for poultry raisers.

Having a merchandising plan is important to grow sales. A merchandising plan can be developed using:

- *Historical sales data*—
How many chicks and what products should a target customer purchase, and how often do customers visit? What other products throughout the store do customers purchase along with chick products? How much do you expect to sell this year? What are the profit expectations for chick days?
- *Competitive information*—
Seek out competitive information by visiting other retailers' store locations and websites, review written materials, and determine what you offer that your competitors don't.
- *Ask customers ahead of the season*—
What challenges and needs do you have? Which products work well for you?
What are your goals in raising poultry?
How can we help?
- *A calendar- plot out the dates and deadlines so you're organized and efficient.*
When are the chicks arriving? When does the in-store display move in?
What are the dates for chick days?
- *Develop a plan-o-gram for chick days*—
What will your in-store display say to customers? What shelving and signage do you need? What are the best locations for chicks and product displays?

Meet the functional and emotional needs of your customers-

"Feeding a probiotic meets the health needs of my chicks. I'm doing the right thing for my chicks and my family."

Why is a merchandising plan important? Decisions should be made ahead of chick days to stock the right product mix and forecast needs to suppliers; so inventory is available throughout the season. This is also your opportunity to develop event marketing strategies, place ads for walk-in traffic and align resources. Consider scheduling experts to share information during chick days to draw customers to the store, or train your sales staff. Above all, make it fun! For many customers, they're bringing home new pets, or starting a venture to raise meat birds or egg laying hens for the family.

Merchandising helps new and existing customers. Customers have expectations, whether conscious or not, about what type of visual displays and products will be offered during certain times of the year. For example, during chick days, customers expect to

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see chicks merchandised with waterers, feed and other complementary products. Plan to have inventory on hand and easily accessible. Be ready with replacement inventory so you don't run out, optimize pre-season shipments, and minimize lost sales. Merchandising helps customers purchase what they need, converts browsers to buyers, and makes it easier for the customer to buy more than planned.

Merchandising requires review. Keep displays new and fresh with a product mix customers need and want. Review sales data at the end of chick days. What went well? What would you change for next year? Which products sold best? Which products could have sold better? Merchandising for chick days starts well before the chicks arrive. By planning ahead, customers can enjoy the experience, purchase what they need to succeed and come back for their poultry needs.