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Customers asked for ducklings last year so we raised a few. That went well so this year we are raising 70 ducklings. They are White Pekin ducks. White Pekin are the most common meat ducks. These are now two weeks old and growing very fast.

I ordered 75 from the hatchery. Through mishap, they were delivered to the wrong post office. Day old chicks, of all types of poultry, have been shipped through the US Post Office for almost 100 years. When done correctly shipping through the mail is safe for the young birds. Most birds do not require food or water for a day or two after hatching. That is because immediately before hatching, the chick's body envelopes the last remaining bolus of nutrients from their birth egg. I assume that is so the rest of their siblings have time to hatch while they wait comfortably under the sitting parent. It often takes 24 hours or more for a clutch of eggs to hatch.

These ducklings were hatched late Tuesday or early Wednesday. Unfortunately, because of the shipping mistake, I did not get them until Friday afternoon.

They were cold, thirsty, and hungry. The weakest were dying.

I set the heater in my pickup to maximum for the 20 minute ride home. I was cooking but they were warmer, stronger, and more active by the time I got them home.

Seventy were still alive when I put them into their brooder pens. All 70 are alive today.

Ducks and geese grow incredibly fast. They are hardy and healthy but at great risk from predators when small.

In the photo the ducks are in an outside run that is 100% enclosed. Wire mesh on the sides to protect them from raccoons, possums, foxes, coyotes and dogs. Overhead wire mesh to protect them from kestrels, hawks, owls, and especially eagles. Eagles readily eat chickens but they specialize on ducks. Ducks are a natural prey for eagles.

A wire mesh is buried six inches under the soil to protect them from mink, weasels, and rats.

They weigh close to a pound now. In another week, we will put them in a protected pasture with the geese.