Today on Across the Fence we welcome some feathered friends. We will meet members of a 4-H club who raised their own chickens and learned about other poultry as well. The kids are here to share with us everything from hatching to habitat. Good afternoon and thanks for joining us I'm Judy Simpson. In just a few minutes we're going to meet the 4-H members who had a fun year learning all about poultry, but I want to start by introducing Paula Rupp. Paula is the volunteer 4-H leader of the Feathered Friends Club. Thanks for being with us.

Paula.: Thank you Judy.

Judy.: Like many 4-H leaders you have some background in this topic. Can you tell me about that?

Paula.: I grew up raising animals and specifically chickens and in most recent adult years but I also was a 4-H member as a child. We did rabbits in that group.

Judy.: So you formed this 4-H club in the spring and what have the kids been learning?

Paula.: We've covered a lot through the summer. We did hatching of eggs and brooding and letting chicks grow up and we've been collecting eggs also.

Judy.: There's probably been a lot of life lessons with the kids. For instance that not all the eggs are going to hatch.

Paula.: Yes we started out with many more eggs than hatched.
Judy.: Some of the club members also did some individual research projects. Can you tell me about those?

Paula.: We had an opportunity to go to a poultry swap and we got some pheasant eggs. We hatched those out and that was an interesting experience to see what those incubate like and what they hatch like.

Judy.: Was it a big difference?

Paula.: Yes it's a time frame difference and the eggs are a bit smaller.

Judy.: There was a community partner that played an important role for the kids and the club can you tell me about that?

Paula.: We're so grateful. Our place where we keep the birds is out at Adams Farm Market in Williston. They've let us rent some space and we're in their pear orchard, which is fantastic.

Judy.: What are some of the things the kids are learning when they're caring for their chickens?

Paula.: Their needs, their basic physical needs, and also how to take care of getting ready for a show; how to clean up and watch them for signs of illness.

Judy.: Are these pets for the kids?

Paula.: The ones that we have hatched we're watching them develop. They are about 18 weeks now. We also had some meat birds which are not pets those are in the freezer already.

Judy.: Six members of the Feathered Friends 4-H club are ready to join us. We're going to introduce them one at a time and each one of the children is going to tell us something about their involvement in hatching and raising their chickens. First is Damian Helen. Hi how are you?

Damian.: Good.

Judy.: You're going to tell us about something called candling eggs what is that?

Damian.: Candling eggs is when you get a candle or a lamp that's really bright.
Judy.: Like this one here you have?

Damian.: Yes like this one. You put the egg over it or under it and you turn it around to see what it has. If there are white lines that means there's a crack in the egg and that means the chick will not stay alive. If there are little red lines they are blood lines and blood vessels like little red dots. You can also incubate eggs and you can also candle them to see if the chick will stay alive.

Judy.: You can see inside when you do that?

Damian.: Yes.

Judy.: That's pretty cool. What have you liked best about your club?

Damian.: I like to go to a lot of the meetings so far and going to the farm.

Judy.: Thank you so much for explaining candling I knew nothing about that. OK we are going to move on to the incubator and here to tell us about that is nine year old Kelly Xu. Did I pronounce your name right Kelly?

Kelly.: Yes.

Judy.: So this is an incubator. Tell me about the different parts of this?

Kelly.: Inside the incubator is 100-121° F. There should be a small thermometer.

Judy.: One here so that's how you can tell.

Kelly.: There is also some moisture inside the incubator normally found under a hen.

Judy.: OK.

Kelly.: For different birds different incubation periods are different.? Like for a chicken they need 21 days to hatch. If you want to hatch a chicken they need to be fertile. And they cannot have any cracks. Even if they are fertile and do not have any cracks they might not hatch.

Judy.: How long does it take a chicken to hatch?
Kelly.: 21 days.

Judy.: Once it starts picking at the shell is it like an hour or longer than that?

Kelly.: Usually it's 1 to 2 hours to pick out.

Judy.: What's the next thing that happens?

Kelly.: After hatching the chicks need to stay inside the incubator for 2 to 6 hours to get used to the heat and being out of the egg.

Judy.: OK that's great we're going to move on now and talk with nine year old Cole Patno come on in. You're going to tell us about something called brooding what is that.

Cole.: Brooding is the stage after the chick has been taken out of the incubator.

Judy.: OK so I will move the incubator back and the chick is out what does it do?

Cole.: It gets put into a brooder. A brooder is a reasonable size container. Some things that you might find in a brooder are small grains of food, drinking water, bedding, a heat lamp and a cover so when a chick gets older it doesn't try to fly out. To reduce pecking the light will be red like this red lamp.

Judy.: It's a red light so they won't peck each other?

Cole.: It will reduce the pecking and once they get older you can turn the lights yellow.

Judy.: OK. Do you have to teach them how to eat and drink?

Cole.: To drink you have to take the chicken and dip its beak into the water.

Judy.: That's pretty exciting. They stay in the brooder for how long?

Cole.: Until they start growing some of their adult feathers.

Judy.: No kidding. Thank you very much. Now the 4-H'ers also learned how to care for and feed their birds properly. Here to tell us more about that is
nine year old Noelani Rupp. Tell me all about caring and feeding for a baby chick.

Noelani.: Caring and feeding for a baby chick once they're old enough to go outside their brooder they should have an outdoor pen and still if it's cold at night you should have also a heat lamp there too. They tend to need still steadily getting bigger grains of food and they like to eat greenery. They also like to forage for bugs. They should have a good outdoor pen but they can live in cages.

Judy.: Do you need a big area for chickens if you have just a couple.

Noelani.: Not necessarily but they will do better in a big area. You also need an electric fence or a regular fence around the chickens because it keeps predators out and keeps the chickens in.

Judy.: OK very good. Let's talk with Lily Mihalach now about getting ready for a show because one of the things the kids have done is gone to fairs and field days with their chickens. Hi. Tell me a little bit about getting the chickens ready; what do you have to do for a chicken? Because they don't wear clothes.

Lily.: No. First you have to catch the chicken and you put it on your lap and you want to try to get the feet and legs off your lap because they could claw you and that would hurt. You want to make sure their wings are tucked in tightly then you take a spray bottle and spray the scaly parts of their legs and feet and you take a toothbrush and put natural soap on it that wouldn't harm them and scrub the scaly parts of their legs and feet. The beginning of a like feathers if they're dirty and then use the spray again to rinse off the soap. Then you dry the legs and turn over the chicken so their legs are in the air and check to see if the underside of their feathers are dirty. Then stretch out their wings one by one to see if they're dirty.

Judy.: That sounds like a lot of work.

Lily.: Yes.

Judy.: We have more members of the Feathered Friends to meet. Joining us is nine year old Ava Carroll. Ava and Noelani are going to show us some of the things they learned about chickens and they're going to get some help from Cole and Damian. This is going to be exciting because this is the first time I've had live chickens over here on Across the Fence. All right so these are ones you have hatched is that correct?
Noelani.: yes.

Judy.: One to go to the other side and the boys can be in the middle and you can explain what's going on here.

Noelani.: This is a female we don't know her breed yet but we can tell she's an Araucana because of her bluish feet.

Judy.: Is she going to run away? OK.

Noelani.: She is a flat comb which is called a p comb. We also think she might be part bantam as she has feathers on her legs. She's a female so she does not have sickles feathers.

Judy.: OK which are the longer feathers?

Noelani.: Yes sickles feathers are the ones that Cheeky has that curl up.

Judy.: OK tell me the difference on this one obviously they look different but what are some of these other things. There we go come on now.

Noelani.: Cheeky is a male and has comb. It's kind of like a crown and he's definitely an Araucana because he has big cheeks and greenish blue feet.

Judy.: Let's see his greenish feet; they almost look like dinosaur feet.

Noelani.: Yeah.

Judy.: When you had these eggs you weren't sure how they're going to hatch out?

Noelani.: We were sure because the greenish blue eggs are Araucana and we know the Araucana lay green blue eggs.

Judy.: OK how old are these chickens?

Noelani.: These chickens are about 18 weeks.

Judy.: They're pretty big for 18 weeks.

Noelani.: Actually they're regular size.
Judy.: I mean I don't know anything about chickens such as seems to me. When will they be considered full grown?

Noelani.: When the males start crowing and female start laying eggs.

Judy.: OK usually when is that Paula?

Paula.: 17 to 22 weeks. So far nothing but that could be a factor from the diminishing daylight also. They need light.

Noelani.: Here on Cheeky they have an ear lobe it's kind of hard to see that it's right there.

Judy.: An ear lobe? You're kidding me.

Noelani.: It's a patch where there's no feathers.

Judy.: OK he's pretty friendly.

Noelani.: Here again are the sickles feathers and the end of tail feathers are under them. The primaries and the secondary’s, their wing, their back and their saddle feathers.

Judy.: OK there's a lot going on. So where will the chickens go from here?

Paula.: We're actually going to be boarding our chickens over the winter and turkeys. In the spring we will start another hatching project.

Judy.: Really? OK is this something you guys all want to participate in again?

Kids.: Yes definitely.

Judy.: Tell me a little bit about this guy here is he going to be used for breeding?

Noelani.: If he turns out to be a nice friendly rooster he will stay and we will keep him if someone will board him.

Judy.: OK. Now Ava you have a poster that you wanted to show. This is part of what you've worked on which is parts of the rooster. We talked about some of the parts, but there are there others. Ava can you show us we're looking at?
Ava.: This is the blade point of the comb. This part right here is the waddle. Noelani showed you right here is the ear lobe.

Judy.: Which I was surprised to see.

Ava.: These are the hackles their feathers right there. Crop. These are the secondary feathers. Primaries or flight feathers are right there. This is the spur, it's actually part of the bone. It sticks out a little.

Judy.: Can we see it on his foot maybe.

Noelani.: Yes we can. You see it is right there. See that little lump. It's that little on right there. And the scales tend to follow it but as they get older it turns white.

Judy.: OK very good. We want to point out that 4-H offers a variety of clubs and activities and programs for kids and teenagers. For more information about opportunities in 4-H you can check out the UVM Extension web site that is listed on your screen or you can call the toll free number to the state 4-H office. That number is 1-(800)-571-0668. I want to thank you all for coming and Paula you mentioned that one of the things the kids have been working on is there rooster call.

Paula.: Oh yes.

Judy.: Maybe you can all give us a rooster call; that would that be good. On the count of 3. 1-2-3.

Kids.: [Rooster call]

Judy.: Nice! I'm really impressed. Thanks for bringing in your chickens and explaining to me something I certainly didn't know anything about. I really appreciate that. That's our program for today I'm Judy Simpson we will see you again next time on Across the Fence.

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