

**Extension's Philosophy for Conducting 4-H
Chick Embryology Programs with Schools
Ohio State University Extension
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The incubation of fertilized chickens in the classroom, as part of Ohio's 4H Chick Embryology program, has been a well established practice since the 1960's. The goals of the program are to enhance the classroom experience for students as they explore the science of egg laying creatures, enrich their understanding of life cycles, increase their respect for living creatures by allowing them to witness and celebrate the hatching of eggs, and if necessary, to encourage discussion at the end of the program as to why some chicks were born with defects or failed to hatch.

The fertilized chicken eggs used by counties come from reputable chick hatcheries around the state. These breeds of chickens, primarily the White Leghorn variety, are domesticated production animals. In some instances, Japanese Quail or Ring-Neck Pheasant eggs are used with the end goal of releasing them into the wild; in cooperation with the Ohio Division of Wildlife.

It is the philosophy of OSU Extension to respect the life of all creatures as guided by the state's ethical standards for the treatment of production animals. Through Extension's 4-H Embryology program, fertilized chicken eggs are taken out of the production cycle, placed in controlled classroom learning situations for observation and hatching, then safely returned to the production cycle. We do not permit fertilized eggs to be opened during incubation, nor euthanized and opened during incubation. Furthermore, we do not permit healthy chicks to be killed and or dissected after hatching, nor do we allow them to be released into the wild. Domesticated production chickens are bred for meat or egg laying purposes rather than survival in the wild. Once chicks are hatched, they are returned by the Extension office to a suitable environment in accordance with the Ohio Department of Agriculture's regulations for production animals. If a chick is sick or born defective, it is removed from the classroom and brought to a Veterinarian for treatment or disposal in accordance with Ohio Department of Agriculture regulations.

All fertilized eggs and live chicks remain the property and responsibility of OSU Extension throughout the duration of the program.