Trout in the Classroom Cheat Sheet

Check pH and Ammonia -- Mondays & Fridays, log data on chart.
---pH should be close to a 7, but is not a big deal if it is a 7.6 unless the trout appear to be stressed. Sometimes a tank "settles" at a number and is better to be left alone than moved up or down. If pH is a 6, the fish are more likely to become stresses. A teaspoon of baking soda should be added in this case under the "waterfall" in the tank. Check pH one hour later and as needed based on fish.
---Ammonia should be close to 0, but is not as big of a deal unless it is .50 or higher. The only true fix to an ammonia issue is a water change, Amquel can be added, but will only take care of things temporarily.
**If you are having an ammonia problem, you may have to change the water a couple days in a row, starting with a larger change the first day (around 7-10 gallons) and follow up with smaller changes the next day. Be sure to monitor the ammonia level closely when you start noticing a problem. You may want to cut back to one feeding a day until things calm down. And, you can turn your chiller temp back a couple degrees to slow down their metabolism temporarily.

Feeding – twice a day, morning and afternoon **OR** three small amounts a day, morning, lunch, and before you leave
**It is important not to feed too much. When you feed them, check back in about 10 minutes and if food is leftover, cut back on the amount next time you feed. If they have eaten all of it and still appear hungry, feed a little more on the next feeding. The trout should have rounded bellies.
**On snow days or breaks, think about leaving a feeding log for the janitor if you are unable to come to school to visit and strongly encourage not to feed too much.

Water Changes – Mondays and Fridays are a good time to do water changes since it is before and after a long weekend, or as needed based on ammonia and pH levels. Log your water changes. You only need to change about 10% of the water; changing more can damage bacteria levels in tank. The only time you need to change more is when you are having major ammonia issues **OR** near the end of the season when your trout are larger and you are feeding more. At that time, you may need to be changing water twice a week or more. Always have aged water on hand – it takes 24 hours for chlorine to dissipate from tap water. If you do not have it on hand in an emergency, add two capfuls of amquel to tap water before adding to tank to remove chlorine.

Daily – check to see if any fish are dead and need to be removed. Dead fish sitting in a tank even overnight can cause ammonia issues. Always record info on mortality sheet.
Daily – monitor tank temperature – temperature should always be between 50-55 degrees Fahrenheit

Weekly – check filters (two blacks and two blues) to see if they need to be cleaned
--- Do NOT clean all filters or replace both of the blue filters on the same day – this can damage your good bacteria established in the tank. The filters may not need to be cleaned every week or may need to be cleaned more than once a week based on how far along in the season you are.

Daily - Watch Out For Sick Fish – Trout are indicator species and can quickly tell you if something is wrong with the system by how they look or how they are acting. If they are dark in color and are settling at the bottom of the tank, it is most likely a pH problem. If they are at the top gasping for air or swimming in circles, it is most likely an ammonia or oxygen problem. If you see any of this, test your pH and ammonia, and contact your TIC Coordinator immediately.

If you are having a trout tank emergency or have questions about the system, please call Krista Hodges, TIC Coordinator, at (434) 250-0292.