

Soils and Crops

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Winter Pigs.

As a general rule, there is less to be made from winter or fall pigs than from those farrowed in the spring. If the spring pigs can be brought to a marketable weight before the market declines the best profit can be realized; however, this is more or less a gamble. There is a good deal of high-priced feed fed to the spring litters during the spring and early summer and when the prices fall there is in many cases a loss or a very narrow margin of profit.

With the fall litters it is best for the pigs to come in September, but those that come later, even into the winter, can be profitably fitted for the market in the spring or later, while the prices are still high.

One of the main points is to have good sows. They must be of the meat-producing type as well as the sire, but not necessarily anything fancy, but of good, strong, robust constitutions, as near the perfect type as can be obtained. The sows should be kept in the best of condition from the time they are bred until the pigs are weaned, then the pigs will have a good start when they are born.

The pigs must have a warm, dry place to sleep. Boards can be fastened up on their edges to enclose a pen six or eight inches deep in which the bedding can be placed. There should always be a good supply of bedding furnished and it should be changed frequently. Plenty of these nests should be made so that the pigs will not crowd too much and get over-warm. It is a very good plan to have an oiler, but a small amount of oil poured along their backs occasionally will keep their skin in good condition, as well as destroy any lice which may be present.

It is by far the best plan to let the pigs feed themselves from self-feeders, the object being to keep them full of the right feeds at all times. As soon as the pigs begin to travel around before they are weaned they should have access to a feeder with shelled corn, tankage, and a mineral mixture. They will begin to eat these while they are quite young. If skim-milk is available it will help materially to give them a good start. Water should be before them at all times. With this feed they will grow fat and will be nice and fat when they are weaned, practically weaning themselves. With this layer of fat on their bodies they are able to withstand the cold and will continue to make good gains throughout the winter and can be put on the market in the spring or early summer while the prices are still high.

It costs more per hundredweight to raise fall pigs than spring pigs, due to the lack of pastures. However, this is offset by the higher prices. If careful attention is paid to all details, it is, in my estimation, profitable to raise fall pigs. During the winter one's time is less expensive and more care and attention can be given.

Why So Many Farm Flocks Are Failures.

During our local poultry show a farmer said to me: "We keep a hundred hens, but they do not pay—at least they do not pay as well as they should. I am disgusted with them."

He invited me to come out and look them over, and said that several members of his community would like to have some advice on poultry-raising. As a number of these families had children who were interested in poultry club work in our township club, I volunteered to go. Your trouble may not be their trouble, but perhaps the twenty or more farms visited will give some idea of a few of the things that may keep poultry profits down. Of course, all of these farms were not losing money from their hens—far from it—but they were not reaching the maximum profit for some of the following reasons: Poor houses, improper methods of feeding, lack of

care, and inferior quality of the stock itself.

Taking the matter of house room first, I found that the first outstanding fault was lack of floor space. Fifteen farms averaged 91 hens each, but the total floor space in the houses on these farms was less than 3,800 square feet. It should have been the accepted rate of four square feet per hen. During fine weather it was not so bad, but when it was stormy many of the houses were so small that the birds were forced to sit humped up. Many of these houses were always damp, and few were either conveniently arranged or comfortable.

In this connection it may be said that six new houses had been recently built in this community, and while they were of types approved by experiment stations and practical poultrymen, in so far as their general lines went, in every single instance the owner had either incorporated some of his own ideas or left out something which he considered of minor importance. These things had lowered the efficiency of the house to a marked degree, and in at least one case made it practically worthless.

There are any number of building types that will fit the average farm, but unless you have time to experiment, and are willing to suffer probable loss, it is best to accept them as they stand. The very thing you leave out or change may be the thing which has made the house successful.

A common fault is in building houses too high, wasting material and leaving an excess of cubic space. This takes extra feed in order for the fowls to heat it. Peculiar designs, extra height, and freak construction cost more, and usually detract from the worth of a poultry building, and if we remember that the plain shed roof is as good as any, and better than most, that square construction is the cheapest construction, and that the type of house designed by our experiment station was built to fit the needs of that particular locality, we will spend less money and have better homes for our hens.

Another feature that is of common occurrence is the practice of locating the poultry house in out-of-the-way places. None of these houses on the farms visited had feed bins built in them. Where the feed must be carried from the barn or crib twice each day, too much extra work is necessary. This is especially true when the men-folk are busy and the work of caring for the hens falls on the women. Every house, of whatever construction, should have built-in feed bins capable of holding at least a week's supply of grain. It should also contain a mash hopper, for a part of the hen's ration must be ground feed if maximum results are to be attained. Even if it is nothing more than ground corn, ground oats, and wheat bran, this ground feed is essential, for a hen cannot turn enough whole grain into eggs to reach the most profitable point in production.

Except on a very few of the farms visited, no mash or green food was given the hens. It is a significant fact that those few farms that were doing this showed the best profits. One farm was getting good results from cabbages, beets, turnips, and other vegetables which had been grown and stored for the purpose. Another sprouted oats daily, while another depended on mangels.

When we consider that as much as 25 per cent. of the hen's rations may be composed of such feed, and that it invariably increased egg production and the average health of the flock, the result of this lack can readily be seen.

Most of these farms could have raised the quality of their stock to an advantage by the introduction of high-class males, and all of them could have stood a rather severe culling among the females. The best procedure on some of them would have been to sell the flock outright, and replace it with purebred stock after faults in housing had been corrected, or to hatch eggs from purebred, vigorous breeding stock, and gradually get rid of the mongrels. However, even these might have been made to pay a better return for the time and money invested if some of the foregoing hindrances had been eliminated.

One of the hardest things to correct on these farms, and in fact on all farms where poultry is a side line, is the variety of personal attention the hens receive. Mother is busy, so she tells Johnny to run and feed the hens, the job falls to Sister the next day, and perhaps the hired girl has her hand in it too.

As a consequence, the hens go for days, or even weeks, without the personal attention of the person most interested in them. It is difficult to get around to this, and perhaps the best method is to turn the poultry work over to some member of the family that has sufficient interest, and whose time can be best spared. Usually the job falls on Mother, whether she is busy or not, so every convenience should be provided that will aid her in caring for the hens. Of these the feed bin, the mash hopper, and the water fount are the most important.

The world has 187,000,000 carats of diamonds.

Growth of the Grain Elevator.

The grain elevator system has grown enormously in Canada and developed rapidly in the last few years. This growth and development have so far been mainly confined to the Prairie Provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, but the system is attracting more and more attention in the other provinces, particularly in Ontario, where several wheat growing and shipping centres, notably Toronto, are agitating for the erection of elevators. Nor is it only in numbers that the system has extended, but the increase in size has been such that some of the structures can fairly be termed mammoth, such for instance as those at the head of the lakes. There are, according to the Hon. George Langley, Minister of Municipal Affairs for Saskatchewan, not fewer than 3,600 (thirty-six hundred) elevators in the three provinces referred to, from 40 to 60 feet high and capable of storing from 20,000 to 30,000 bushels a piece on the average, a few reaching to twice the greatest enumerated capacity. In other words, upwards of 110,000,000 bushels of wheat can thus be stored at the one time. These facts and figures are taken from an interesting article by Mr. Langley in the September number of the Agricultural Gazette of Canada. By the terms of the Canada Grain Act, the owners of the elevators, mostly private individuals or incorporated companies, are compelled to accept all grain offered by farmers, unless wet or unstorable with safety, hence the general and common use of the system. The elevators are all licensed by, and are under the supervision of the Board of Grain Commissioners of Canada.

The Milking of Cows.

Shall cows be milked twice or three times a day? To the average reader this may seem of small concern. To the farmer and dairyman it is a question of considerable interest. Tests have recently been made in Nova Scotia, Quebec and Ontario. Professor Barton of Macdonald College says that it has been found from the standpoint of economy and safety that a cow giving 60 lbs. of milk a day should be milked three times. Both Professor Trueman of the Nova Scotia Agricultural College and Professor Barton are agreed, however, that unless the udder is over-distended there is little or no advantage to be gained by milking three times a day. These authorities are quoted in the September number of the Agricultural Gazette of Canada. Professor Wade Toole also contributed to a solution of the same problem by giving results of tests made at the Ontario Agricultural College. The tests are to be continued and Professor Toole hopes to be able to give a more definite opinion another year than he does at present. In the meantime he shows that three

The Welfare

By Charlotte

The Choice of Children's Books.

One day recently, an aunt, one of those family-institution aunts to whom everybody takes his troubles, said to me: "Why is it that our children are still being told stories and given story books which are full of pernicious rubbish? I've just returned from visiting my nieces who are usually so thoughtful about the welfare of their children that I expected something better in their nurseries, but, instead I found their little ones immersed in the old tale of fear, cruelty and wicked stepmothers. Moreover, these stories were in the most wonderfully illustrated books! In choosing the books great interest had been shown in the artists who had made the pictures but open indifference toward the stories."

"That answers the 'Why,'" I ventured. As yet, few of the best story books are "wonderfully illustrated" and consequently lose the opportunity to capture the indifferent purchaser. Of course, this indifference is not intentional. Devoted mothers would shudder at the thought of bringing harmful playmates into the lives of their children, and yet through the careless purchase of books they often introduce their little ones to vicious company.

The advertising power of the illustration is the cause of much of the trouble. "Here am I," cries the prettiest picture book on the shop counter, and the purchaser looks no further. It is quite likely that this same book is the usual version of Cinderella, encumbered with the odious step-mother, not at all necessary to the plot, but contributing from one generation to another to an unwholesome prejudice. The charming Irish version, which entirely omits this character, is not so easily found by the casual buyer. If, however, the casual buyer wishes to become more purposeful, there is a long list of books full of helpful directions which may be consulted.

For the sake of brevity only four are mentioned. These books are suggestive and contain many delightful stories. It is almost certain that one or more of them can be found in any public library, and a study of the suggestions and lists which they contain will be of great assistance. Story Telling in School and Home, by E. N. and G. E. Partridge; Educating by Story-Telling, by Katherine Dunlap Cather; Stories to Tell to Children, by Sara Cone Bryant; Children's Stories and How to Tell Them,

mother who is interested can find it with the help of the librarian or by consulting the tables of contents in bound volumes of the best children's magazines; she can retell the material thus gained in a simple form suitable to her own child.

It is worth while for any parent to give some time and study to planning definitely the ground to be covered, for if all the reading develops some general scheme and is not purely haphazard, a very great and telling addition to a boy's or girl's education may be made with very slight effort on the part of the parent.

The following references may be helpful to parents. What Shall We Read to Our Children? by C. W. Hunt; The Children's Book, by Horace E. Scudder; Home Book of Verse for Young People, by Burton E. Stevenson.

throat, or a discharge from the nostrils, a few crystals of permanganate of potash dissolved in water, is excellent treatment. A feather dipped in this solution and passed into throat or nostrils will almost always cure thin and watery discharges.

Abundance of sharp grit is the best preventive of diarrhoea. Warmed castor oil is necessary when this condition shows itself—usually by excitement of yellowish color—a teaspoonful and a half for a hen, two for a rooster. Food should be limited to dry rice and corn. Each bird should be given, for at least three days, pills made of a heaped teaspoonful of powdered chalk mixed with one-half teaspoonful of powdered ginger. This combination is harmless, so no exact number of pills need be named. If diarrhoea develops into dysentery, five drops of chloroanodyne, obtainable

A saver for a farmer's wife is a policeman's whistle. To leave a half-baked cake, or the churning, or dough-nuts frying, is very annoying. The men may be at the barns, or a quarter of a mile away in some field. From either of these places the whistle call can reach them. The human voice can not.

Your farm may be in your name and it may be free from the heavy hand of a mortgage, but are you not simply holding it in trust? Your children will call you blessed if you leave two blades of grass growing where only one grew before. Everything comes from the soil. Give it your best and you will be rewarded; take all from it and you rob the soil, and also yourself.

Buy Thrift Stamps.