

POULTRY YARD

Strain Important

A. G. Gilbert, before Standing Committee, Ottawa.

Care should be taken in buying eggs for hatching to ascertain that they are from good egg laying strains, for there are good and bad egg laying strains of fowls, as there are good and bad strains of milch cows. I have already shown the importance to the farmer of a trap nest selected strain of fowls from both market type and egg-producing standpoints. An important matter in connection with the possibilities of large margins of profit to be made from the trap nest proved prolific layers and improved market type of fowls, is worth consideration at this point. If, as many farmer correspondents to the Agricultural Press have stated, they can make satisfactory margins of profit from the hens of the present day which lay from 60 to 90 eggs per year (this

number is a fair average of the number of eggs laid by the present day fowls), how much more satisfactory will that margin of profit be when their fowls lay double the number of eggs per day, and are still better market types?

It may be said that there are other varieties—other than those named—which are also excellent layers and market types. Why not name them? I reply, because they are not in such great numbers throughout the country as the varieties I have named, and in consequence, are neither so well known, or easy to procure. The Barred Plymouth variety beyond doubt is held in the greatest number by the farmers of the country to-day and deservedly so. I have always given them first place on account of their merits as egg and flesh producers. Farmers can readily purchase at a cheap price from one or another Barred Plymouth Rock eggs or stock, while other varieties are comparatively scarce and held at higher prices. The starting of the farmer, or other poultry keeper, right is a matter of very great importance. This, I am sure, you will readily admit.

Queries re Ducks

I have been reading your paper that my brother likes so well, and was interested in your article on "How to conduct a profitable Pekin Duck Ranch." I could like a little further light on the subject, and if you would please answer the following questions it would oblige me very much. (1) How much room would a duck and drake require to keep them properly? (2) What is the best food when making them lay? (3) How many eggs should a duck lay in a season? (4) Where is a good place to set a hen with duck eggs? (5) How many eggs should be set under a medium sized hen? (6) Should a duck that was raised last summer lay? (7) Should ducks be disturbed when laying or near laying? (8) When sheep pen be a good place to let them lay if sheep and other fowl are in with them? (9) Is it necessary that ducks be kept in every night?—R. B. Laurel, Ont.

(1) If a pair of ducks are confined in a pen 6 ft square would be large enough, and a yard 6 x 50 ft enough for a run way, if plenty of water is given and grass growing in the run. As ducks do no harm to gardens, they will do better if given free range.

(2) Any kind of clop with bran and shorts mixed with boiled vegetable is good feed for ducks. Ducks require quantity rather than quality, and an endless supply of water.

(3) A duck will lay as high as

100 eggs in a season, if from a selected breed to lay strain.

(4) Set duck eggs on the ground, if it is a place that is to be protected so that nothing can disturb her.

(5) Nine eggs is plenty for a medium sized hen to cover.

(6) Certain ducks hatched any time before June last year should commence laying in March at least.

(7) It is better not to move any fowl from one pen to another during laying season. A few cases are peculiar in this respect, however, than a hen.

(8) As a duck is liable to lay anywhere, over the floor rather than in a nest, it would be better to keep the sheep and ducks apart.

(9) The reason ducks are shut up at night is to secure the eggs. A duck will hurry out to forage as early as it can get out, and if a pond of water is available they are likely to lay in the water as anywhere. The only way to be sure of the eggs is to confine the ducks until they lay in the morning, and then let them go.

Watch the health of the chicks every day. If you see one looking dumppish, look for a cause. If it seems to have diarrhoea, it may be from lack of grit, or too sloppy or sour food, or perhaps an overfed of wheat. Correct the fault at once, before more of the flock are affected. See that the drinking water is always clean and fresh.

Keep the flocks of different ages apart, or the younger ones will be crowded away from the feed. Harm is often done by the little fellows being forced to go on short rations, before it is noticed that they are too late to make up for lost time. The safest way is to watch for these little things. Prevent them, rather than try to cure them afterwards.

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