

POULTRY.

Producing Early Molting in Hens.

The West Virginia Station calls attention to the fact that "when a specialty is made of producing winter eggs it is of much importance to have the hens shed their feathers early in the fall, so that the new plumage may be grown before the cold weather begins. In case molting is more delayed, the production of the new coat of feathers in cold weather is such a drain on the vitality of the fowls, that few, if any, eggs are produced until spring, while if the molt takes place early in the season the fowls begin winter in good condition, and with proper housing and feeding may be made to lay during the entire winter." The Station reports tests on two-year-old Rhode Island Reds and White Leghorns of the Van Dresser method of promoting early molting, which "consists in withholding food either wholly or in part for a few days, which stops egg-production and reduces the weight of the fowls, and then feeding heavily on a ration suitable for the formation of the feathers and the general building up of the system. Beginning August 5th, the chickens received no feed for thirteen days, except the very small amount they could pick up in 15 by 100 foot runs. They were then fed liberally on mash, beef scraps, corn, wheat and oats—i.e., a ration rich in protein or nitrogenous matter, which is believed to be especially valuable for promoting the growth of feathers as well as muscle. The hens stopped laying on the seventh day. Thirty days after the test began, the Rhode Island Reds had practically a complete coat of new feathers, had begun to lay, and within a week from that time one-half of the hens were laying regularly, while another lot of the Rhode Island Reds, which had been fed continuously, were just beginning to molt, and the egg production had declined materially. The White Leghorns were a trifle slower in molting than the Rhode Island Reds, but otherwise the treatment affected them in a similar way.

The results seem to warrant the general conclusion that "mature hens which are fed very sparingly for about two weeks and then receive a high nitrogenous ration molt more rapidly and with more uniformity, and enter the cold weather of winter in better condition than similar fowls fed continuously during the molting period on an egg-producing ration.—[U. S. Bulletin.

Dressed Poultry.

There is one feature of the poultry business of recent introduction which is growing with rapid strides, and bearing all the marks of permanency, presenting opportunities for money-making of which few farmers have as yet availed themselves. The demand in the home cities for well-fatted fowl has been far from supplied, and behind that we have the yawning gulf of the chicken appetite of the million-mouthed British consumer to which to cater. The white breast cuts are coming more and more into favor in the high-class restaurants, and poultry sent across the sea this year sold for from 14 to 16 cents per pound. Having, then, such unlimited markets at home and abroad, with high prices ruling, our only concern need be to study the requirements of the market and to furnish the product it demands. The profit is assured.

In undertaking to cater to this market, we must exercise care in the choice of breeds, knowing that the consumer has cultivated peculiarities in his appetite which refuse dark legs or dark flesh in fowl. While it may be said with considerable truth, that success depends upon preference, to a degree, yet none should allow preference to be an absolute guide. I believe no mistake will be made if those breeding for this market would follow the "old reliable" breeds of Barred Rocks and White Wyandottes. The Buff Orpington is coming into favor, having quite sufficient strong points to warrant the popularity with which it is being received. Breeders should aim to secure uniformity. The market asks for large birds, well fatted. We, therefore, must choose a breed having size and a fitness in disposition for being crated for fattening. The breadth and general blockiness of the Barred Rock, together with their ease in adapting themselves to surroundings, commend them for this purpose.

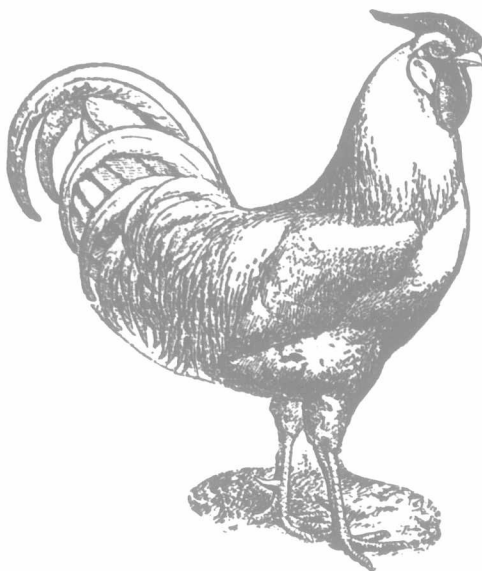
When the birds have attained a weight of 3½ to 4 pounds, it is time to crate for fattening. This crating process for the chicken is like stall feeding the grass-fat steer, and it is the time when the biggest money is made. The crates are built of lath, on a frame 6 feet long, 18 to 20 inches square, divided into three sections, and raised to an elevation convenient for feeding. We usually place twelve birds in each crate. Oats ground fine, with buckwheat in equal parts, or oats alone, mixed with skim milk, is the best ration. In the event of not being able to obtain skim milk, boiled potatoes are the best substitute. The usual time required to bring the birds to a weight of about six pounds is from three to four weeks, and the result of this method is that you have a finished article, superior in every way to the ordinary poultry offered, which easily commands the highest price paid.

Starve the chickens for about a day and a half before killing. Our best local market here is Montreal, which asks for the fowl bled in the roof of the mouth. Pluck dry immediately after sticking, leaving the coarse feathers all on. While cooling, press into shape by using a pressing board, which is best, or by pressing with the hands repeatedly while cooling, the object be-

ing that the fowl will pack well and appear to the best advantage when it arrives at its destination.—[G. H. Hutton, at Farmers' Institute meeting.

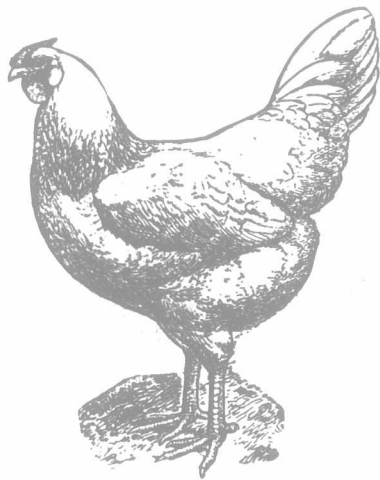
Getting Birds Ready for Exhibition.

In preparing birds for exhibition, it must be borne in mind that the different breeds require different treatment. In the first place, we will take the large-combed breeds, such as Minorcas, Leghorns, etc. In these varieties, where comb and lobe play such an important part, even cockerels and pullets require somewhat different management in order to secure the best results. When the young birds have reached the age of five months it will be quite time to select the best and those you wish to make their mark in the show pen. Having made our selection, the cockerels should be put into shaded runs, protected on all sides from the wind and the sun,



Rose-Comb White Leghorn Cock.

and if the pen is darkened, all the better to whiten the lobe, but they must not be kept too warm or they will shoot too much comb, and thereby become useless as exhibition specimens. Therefore, it will be seen that, although it is necessary to give them absolute shade, it is necessary at the same time that the run shall be well ventilated. Pullets, on the other hand, require shaded runs and as warm as possible, as the warmth will help develop the comb, so necessary in pullets. Should it be found impossible to produce sufficient comb in the pullets whilst in these covered runs on grass, they should be removed indoors to a warm room and placed in a darkened pen, but still having sufficient light to enable them to eat. They must not be kept too long in these warm pens indoors, otherwise they will be liable to go white in face, and the remedy will be worse than the disease. Green food must be given each day, and once a day a few picks of finely-shredded raw beef. The morning feed should consist of bread and milk during the time that the birds are being prepared for the show pen. In the case of Minorcas, it will be advisable to add a little citrate of iron and potash to the drinking water, using only enamel vessels for the purpose, not zinc. The evening feed should be



Rose-Comb White Leghorn Hen.

white Canadian peas, and these will tend to put a gloss on the plumage, so essential in Minorcas. The same instructions apply to Brown Leghorns, and the same food and water, excepting the shredded meat, will also apply to all black and dark-plumaged birds, but where small combs are an important point, meat should be given very sparingly.

HANDLING OF WHITE BIRDS.

Birds of white plumage should neither have

iron nor yet be fed on corn or corn meal, as both these will, if used in excess, cause the plumage to become creamey or yellow, although maize is very beneficial to yellow leg color. Buff birds of all varieties require to be rigidly shaded from the sun if they are required for the show pen, and this shading should take place just previous to the bird putting on the adult plumage, and should be kept up so long as they are required for exhibition.

Feather-legged birds, and more especially those that should have an abundance of foot feather, should be kept on dry, sandy runs; fine sea sand is preferable where it is procurable, and this should be to a depth of three or four inches at least, in order to prevent the foot feather from becoming broken. These birds should not be allowed to perch, but the floor of the sleeping quarters should be covered with a good thickness of chaff or very fine peat moss litter. All soft-feathered breeds, no matter what color, should have plenty of soft food, and especially so during their growing stage. On the other hand, all hard-feathered birds, viz., Game and Game Bantams, require plenty of hard food, such as white Canadian peas, good stout oats, or the best red Kansas wheat. Where sheen plays such an important part nothing beats white Canadian peas, and these will also keep them in hard condition. Game birds, owing to their nature, should have as much freedom as possible; consequently, where natural shade can be given them, it is much to be preferred to artificial.

TREATMENT OF DARK-PLUMAGED BIRDS.

Dark-plumaged birds of all varieties do not require to be washed so frequently as whites and buffs, although a good wash now and again will greatly improve the plumage. In such cases, when it is not necessary to wash the bird, it will be all the better for being well rubbed down with a damp sponge, using clear tepid water, and afterwards rubbed (going the way of the feather) thoroughly dry with a soft towel, and then polished with a silk pocket-handkerchief. It is surprising what a beautiful sheen can be put on to a black bird in this manner, and this should always be done the day previous to sending to a show, or even on the morning of the show.

WASHING BIRDS.

In the first place, three bowls of water are necessary, a large sponge, an ordinary nail-brush, a bar of some good soap (not scented), two or three towels (ordinary bath towels preferred), and a good supply of soft water. Bowl No. 1 should contain warm water, as warm as you can comfortably bear your hand in, and sufficient in which to immerse the bird, just leaving the head above water when held down in the bath. The comb, face and wattles should be well scrubbed with soap, using the ordinary nail-brush for the purpose, then wiped dry with the sponge. The bird's legs should then be well soaked in water, holding them there for three or four minutes; then take the nail-brush and soap, and give them a vigorous scrubbing, and if there is any dirt left underneath the scales, this should be removed with the point of your penknife, or, better still, a match-stalk sharpened to a fine point, which can be more readily inserted under the scales and all dirt removed. Having done this, they should be again scrubbed with soap and water. The bird should now be held in the water in a crouching position, with his head just above the water. Allow him to remain in this position a few minutes to thoroughly soak the feathers, and, having done so, the bird should now be allowed to stand up, and the soap should be well rubbed into the feathers, rubbing the feathers well all the time with your hand, and squeezing out the dirt. Repeat the operation until all trace of dirt is removed. Immerse the bird in the water again to get out all the soap you can, then place it in water No. 2, which should also be warm, but not so warm as No. 1. With the sponge rub the clean water well into the feathers, and this must be done thoroughly, or all your labor will be in vain, for if any trace of soap is allowed to remain the bird will be in a worse condition at the finish than when you commenced. The bird can now be taken out and put into bath No. 3, which should contain water new-milk warm, or just with the chill off. In the case of white birds, a little blue should be added to the third water, just sufficient to tinge the water slightly, but be very careful that you do not put in too much blue when washing white birds. On the other hand, in washing Barred Rocks more blue must be added, and this will improve the ground color considerably. In using the blue, it should be placed in a piece of flannel and tied up, put in the water, and as much squeezed out as the case requires. In washing buff breeds, of course, no blue whatever is required. After having sponged the bird thoroughly in the third water, all the water possible should be absorbed by the aid of a sponge, and if the sponge be a large one of good quality, the bird can be half dried by the process. Then remove the bird from the water, and wipe him as dry as possible with the aid of a towel, after which it should be placed in an unlined exhibition hamper or one of the ordinary exhibition wire pens (the former preferred), with some nice clean hay