

Convenient Roosts and Nests.

The work of caring for the farm flock of poultry is reduced and made more pleasant by having the poultry house fixtures conveniently arranged. It is small wonder that many farmers dislike the task of cleaning the poultry house when the roosts are simply poles nailed across one end of the house, and the nests—often nailed to the wall—are frequently used as roosting places by the hens. In such a house, lice and mites are apt to reign supreme, and the unfortunate wight who has the job of cleaning up will come out with a creepy feeling from head to foot, and hatred in his heart for the whole feathered tribe. Such houses are the result of that old notion to which some farmers still cling, that chickens "don't pay," and are merely tolerated as a sort of necessary evil. But chickens do pay if they are given proper care. This is particularly true of farm flocks, for they pick up a good share of their living around the barns and corn-crib during the summer months.

One of the chief requisites of success is clean quarters. A conveniently arranged house is least likely to be neglected, hence it is important that rooms and nests be constructed and arranged properly, as they are the main fixtures. Roosts require frequent oiling or whitewashing in order to keep vermin in check. If they are removable, it is an easy matter to keep them clean. One of the most satisfactory plans is to make the roosts of two-by-four scantlings, the ends resting on notched cleats at each end of the platform used to catch the droppings. By giving the ends and under sides frequent attention, there should be no trouble from lice. There are various swinging, self-oiling and other patent roosts, the use of which is promised to keep the house free from vermin; but the fact remains that whatever sort of roost is used, we must be eternally vigilant to keep the lice and mites from getting ahead of us. If it is preferred to have the ends of the roosts away from the wall, they may be shortened and nailed to boards eight inches wide and long enough to accommodate the required number of roosts. The boards rest on the platform and, for cleaning, the entire roost is lifted off.

Hens detest filthy nests, and will not lay in them if they can find a better place. Nests nailed to the wall are an abomination, for they afford an excellent hiding place for lice, where it is difficult to get at them. As a rule, we make our nests in sections of three each, each nest being fifteen by twelve inches and twelve inches high. They are placed beneath the platform, and, as they have a removable top, it is easy to gather the eggs. As the nests face the wall, the hens never get into the habit of roosting in them. We examine the nests frequently to make sure they have not be-

come infested with lice. A handful of air slaked lime is placed in the bottom of each nest box, and when nesting material is renewed it is sprinkled with insect powder. By using these precautions we have little trouble with lice or mites.

Seed Potatoes.

Had the same methods of breeding been practised in the production of our domestic animals as have been used in producing our potato crops, there would have been no such thing as Guernseys, Shorthorns, Shropshires and Poland Chinas. Haphazard methods have not produced these superior animals, and experience has taught us that practically the same principles apply in the production of improved plants. Breeders of livestock do not base their operations upon the individual, but they consider the family; the individual's pedigree is of as much importance as the individual itself. A dairy cow's value for breeding purpose is based very largely upon her performance at the pail.

Now, why should not these same principles apply in the production of potatoes? They do, but comparatively few men seem to realize it. The potato is one of the most common crops grown and the consumptive capacity of this country is enormous, yet it is surprising what little attention is given to its improvement. It has become a common notion that potatoes grown from the same stock year after year will gradually deteriorate or "run out." The real cause of this decrease in productivity and in quality is the law of heredity—like produces like. Planting the potatoes that were too small for the women folks to peel is the prime cause of most of this so-called "running out."

Even selecting desirable tubers from the bin is not a good method of improving the yield. The basis of selection should be the plant, it should be the unit instead of the potato itself. A fine specimen selected from the bin may have come from a hill producing a large number of marketable potatoes and it may not. The chances are often against it.

Farmers who pay a little attention to improvement in the selection of seed will soon create a demand which will bring more than market prices for their product.

Depreciation of Farm Tools.

Fall is nearly here and winter will follow shortly. Are those farm tools which one sees out under the trees or in fence corners of any account? If not, why not sell them for old iron and clean up the place? If they are, should they not be put under the shed or in the barn? Iron will rust, you know, and paint will easily scale off.

Rusted plow shares, mold-boards or cultivator shovels are full of pits caused by the small iron scales which drop off in the

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