

POULTRY YARD

Millions of Mites

It is conservative to say that there are millions of mites in the poultry houses of Canada. A farmer recently asked: "What ails my hens? They lay no eggs on the nest." A few questions brought out the fact that they died from loss of blood, sucked from their bodies by the mites that were allowed to infest their nests in the henhouse. His hens died—marry to their marital instinct.

Chicken-mites belong to the spider family, have eight legs, and can run like "sixty." They are the hens' bed-bugs, spending the night in sucking the blood of their victims, and hiding in cracks and crevices during the daytime. They have no mercy on old or young; and, infesting the poultry-house, have been known to deprive young chicks of their lifeblood in a single night.

WHERE THEY COME FROM

They breed in dirt and filth. To guard against them, the house should be kept scrupulously clean during the spring and summer months. Nesting materials and litter should be removed every two weeks at least. The roosts and fixtures should be frequently removed and treated with some of the commercial sheep-dips, or with kerosene emulsion, and hot whitewash. These insecticides should be sprayed into all the cracks and crevices where the mites hide. By passing the hand beneath the roosts one can find them, if the house is infested. Unceasing warfare must be made against them if the mites are to be driven from the place. If one thing fails, try another, and persevere until in all good conscience you can say: "There are no mites in my chicken-house."

Points on Eggs

The cause of some of the breakage in eggs is the lack of mineral matter for the egg shell. Oyster shells or bone will furnish this mineral matter for the production of thicker shelled eggs.

Whenever a fertile egg is kept at a temperature above 70 deg. to 80 deg. Fahr., incubation starts. If conditions are favorable for it, the process of incubation continues; if not, the germ dies and decays. The loss from this source will be lowered if eggs are gathered twice a day during hot weather and placed in a cool, moderately dry cellar until marketed.

A storage place for eggs should be free from damp and odors. The eggs should be protected from the hot sun while being taken to market.

Eggs which have been tested out of incubators or gathered from nests not visited the previous day should not be placed on the market. Some of these eggs are fertile and are certainly not very desirable food.

If sitting hens are separated from the laying flock and no male birds allowed with the hens, except during the breeding season, the losses from incubation will be still lower. Hens lay as well without mating, and infer-

tile eggs do not deteriorate nearly so soon as do fertile ones.

Shrunken or held eggs make up one of the greatest losses. They are very common in the fall and early winter. Shrunken or held eggs, aside from losing moisture, may become musty or may rot if kept in a cellar that is too warm, and if fertile, may incubate if kept in a storage room that is too warm.

Washed eggs rot more readily than those not washed. The dirty eggs, if sold at all, would better be sold dirty than washed.

Moldy and bad-flavored eggs may develop in storage; the feeding of onions to laying hens has produced an onion flavor in eggs. Storing in musty cellars or with some fruits, vegetables, fish or cheese will give bad flavors to the eggs.

Egg producers should take sufficient pride in their product to give it proper care from the time it is laid until it is marketed. Subsequent handlers should exercise a similar precaution.

Eggs may be a delicacy or only an ordinary, or even inferior, material for food purposes, depending very largely upon the way they are handled by producer, middleman and consumer.

Swiss Chard a Green Food

"My birds are very fond of Swiss Chard or Asparagus Beet. I have never seen this recommended, but I believe in it for summer feed. It is very tender, and in appearance is much like celery. My birds like it even better than rape. It and rape are fed on alternate days. Were I to white of the eggs."

In these words Mr. S. G. Wert, Stormont Co., Ont., told an editor of Farm and Dairy of his experience with Chard as a green food for fowl. Mr. Wert grows a small patch of this Swiss Chard near his poultry yard. He used to raise it in his garden for greens. One day he noticed that whenever he cut it out they began to eat it in preference to anything else. This led him to grow some for their use with such good results that he has continued to do so. While our editor was there he found the Swiss chard to be liked by his hens, who seemed to enjoy it greatly.

Lime in Poultry Yards

The poultry-leeper should make it a rule to lay in a few barrels of newly-burnt lime at the beginning of the year, for use in his yards at all seasons. A little of this lime should be laid out in a better way, for lime is a most valuable material to help in warding off diseases, and in keeping the houses, appliances, and yards in the best possible condition. It is the most effective agent in combating the depredations of insect vermin, one of the most dreaded enemies of the poultry-keeper.

It is best to buy the lime freely burnt, although it costs a little more than if it were slaked, and to store it in air-tight barrels, from which it can be taken and slaked as required for use. It will then have full power, and will be found useful not only as a whitewash but also for application in a dry state, on the floors, walls, perches, nest-boxes, yards, etc. A sprinkling of dry lime is an excellent thing for drying up damp walls and floors, and for destroying the germs of roup, which are liable to lurk in damp corners of the fowl-house.

Lime may also be freely used with very great advantage as a dressing in the rearing yards which are infested with gameworms, or is a destroyer of all insects, germs, and

worms, and is not in the least injurious to fowls or chickens. There is no cheaper or more effective germicide and insecticide than lime.—Irish Homestead.

Poultry Pointers

Feed plenty of green food.

The day-old chick business is getting to be profitable. It is the safest way for one to get a start.

There is but one and that is the right way. Don't put off for to-morrow what should be done to-day.

Renew the litter on the floor and put fresh straw in the nests before they get dirty.

Corn ensilage is the cheapest and most desirable of bulky feeds. All should have one; two are better.

A mixture of grains make a more profitable and more palatable ration than grains fed singly.

The legumes, alfalfa, clover, peas, vetches, etc., make the best of food and improve the land on which they grow.

There is a decline in the price of dressed ducks this month, but the prices for roasting fowl continue good.

Clover and Grass Seed Crops

T. G. Hayner, Seed Division, Ottawa

Now that so much stress is laid on pure seed, every producer of seed should be more or less familiar with certain weeds, the seeds of which if allowed to ripen with the crop will depreciate its value. Bulletins and reports, obtainable on application to the Dominion or Provincial Departments of Agriculture, will be found very useful in the study of weeds. Specimens that cannot be recognized from the bulletins may be sent to the Botanist of one of the Departments of Agriculture. Farmers should be able in a large measure to eliminate them from the seed crop.

Timothy seed grown on even dirty land may be kept comparatively free from some kinds of weed seeds that would otherwise be present by cutting the timothy with high stubble. Other weeds may be hand pulled or spudded out. Ox-eye Daisy, yellow Flax, Canada Thistle and Catchfly are among the most prevalent noxious weeds. Good screening will clean out most of the other weed seeds usually found in timothy seed.

Catchfly is one of the weeds most frequently found in alsike and is often present in quantity. It can easily be pulled. Ribgrass or buckhorn is found sometimes in timothy and alsike, but is more prevalent in timothy. Ribgrass and Ragweed are seeds hard to separate from red clover seed, as are also seeds of Bladder Campion and Green Foxtail. These weeds should be hand pulled or spudded from the seed crop. Ribgrass may easily be noticed four or five days after mowing the first crop. Thin that if it were slaked, and to store it in air-tight barrels, from which it can be taken and slaked as required for use. It will then have full power, and will be found useful not only as a whitewash but also for application in a dry state, on the floors, walls, perches, nest-boxes, yards, etc. A sprinkling of dry lime is an excellent thing for drying up damp walls and floors, and for destroying the germs of roup, which are liable to lurk in damp corners of the fowl-house.

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