

## INCUBATORS and BROODERS.



We invite correspondence for this important department of commercial poultry raising, which is growing so rapidly in Canada.

### INCUBATORS AND CHICKS.

SO much has appeared in the poultry press of late regarding the rearing of young chicks by artificial means, that if my limited experience will be of benefit to anyone, they are entirely welcome to it. The first thing to be remembered and never lost sight of is that, regardless of the quality of the brooder, the long list of testimonials which the manufacturers offer and how near to the natural hen the machine really is, at the same time it is nothing more or less than a machine and as such must be run according to atmospheric conditions. The best brooder manufacturers send with their machines a set of rules regarding the operation, which are all very good, but at the same time in this climate no set of iron-clad rules can be laid out and then followed without any variation. Good, common, horse-sense is what is required, and must be exercised or disaster will surely follow. I have found to my sorrow this past spring and summer that you must not feel that because you have a good brooder, it will do your

thinking for you, and adjust itself to different conditions. It cost me several batches of chicks to learn that, but I think I have it learned at last.

The next thing on the list is the feed. There are probably as many different methods of feeding chicks as there are different batches of chicks being fed and, of course, everybody thinks their way the best. The method I have followed this season with good results is this: When the little fellows come from the machine (which is about as soon as the last ones out of the eggs are thoroughly dry, or, perhaps, twenty-four hours after the hatch has commenced in good shape) they are put in the brooder, care being taken that they do not get chilled in the transit from one machine to the other. I try to have the temperature of the brooder very nearly that of the incubator and then lower it gradually every day or two. The first feed, which is not given until they are twenty-four hours out of the shell, consists of bread crumbs, dry. For about two days that is all they get, and at the end of that time they are fed steel-cut oat meal, commonly known as "pin-head" oat meal. I cover the floor of the brooder about an inch thick with chaff from a hay-mow, which is, principally seeds of different kinds, and in this is sprinkled, a little at a time, this oatmeal, and it does not take them long to find it. They have water before them all the time after the first day. A small platform is built outside of the brooder, with sides about six inches high, and over this is laid half-inch mesh wire. If early in the spring they are kept off the ground for ten days or two weeks. When they are allowed on the ground, I make a yard for them, using sixteen foot boards, twelve inches wide and a quarter of an inch thick. These cost about twenty cents apiece. They are kept in this yard until they commence to use their wings and then they are allowed to run

with all over the place. They are kept on oat-meal for about two weeks and then it is alternated with whole wheat. For grit I give them nothing for the first day or two then take a flat stone and pound up crockery to a fine powder and put it in the chaff in the brooder, or, if the weather is settled, in chaff on the platform. This crockery can be pulverised much finer than the commercial chick-grit usually is and I have had very good results from its use. It is frequently stated that the first feed the little fellows get is grit. That does not seem right to me and my experience is that they will take the crumbs and oat-meal first and then tackle the grit.

After they are two weeks old and have been allowed to wander and there are larger chicks on the place, I always make a pen of lath with space between the lath for the

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