

A Few Comments.

When returning the list of varieties Geo. A. Robertson makes the following comment.

"I enclose the list of fruits as requested. Your letter is a very timely one, and I think of all the important things we, as fruit growers, have to decide, it is the choice of varieties, and perhaps I may add the procuring of proper trees of these varieties. As a grower of tree fruits, not now growing any small fruits, I have heard the discussions on the qualifications—size, color and flavor. But the all important one has usually been left out; that is, the habit of the variety to bear good crops annually. The other qualities are, of course, to be combined with this essential one.

"In looking over my list, the varieties are, as near as possible, in the order of ripening. The peaches are confined to two varieties of early, and only four of late, the three in brackets being practically the same peach. The late varieties are those which bear well, size up well, and are yellow-fleshed and hardy. I have dropped Smock as being too late, ripening in the cool weather usually when the demand for peaches is past. Chair's Choice, Niagara and Reeve's Favorite are uncertain bearers and the Longhurst, Crosby, New Prolific and the various Michigan varieties are too small, except for canning purposes.

"The commercial pears are all good size, good bearers, and good shippers. The domestic list includes some rather small for market.

"In the commercial plums I have included only Burbank of the Japanese and Shiro which is a half-bred Japanese, including only the larger varieties of their season, as the little plums like Lombard are rather hard to market sometimes at a profit. In the domestic list I have included the earlier Japs which are all right for their season, but should not be marketed for fear some one would can some through ignorance and that would deter them from trying to can plums again.

"In sweet cherries I grow almost all the list, but have given the varieties I find which are profitable with me and include a succession in ripening. If the Bing proves all right I shall replace Elkhorn with Bing and add Lambert on, as it fruits a week later than Windsor;

that is, if it fulfils what it promises to be, but will not recommend it for a year or two as my trees are too young yet. In the sour varieties the English Morello is not profitable with me.

"Red Grapes are not commercially profitable with me as they are shy bearers. New black varieties are also not too prolific.

"I shall not make any comment on the small fruits. I have grown them, but my succession of crops does not allow me to grow any now, as they conflict with the asparagus and tree-fruit crops."

When studying these returns the reader should take notice of the number of times a certain variety is mentioned by the different growers, such as Elberta or Yellow St. John peaches, and the Bartlett pear. It is some indication of their popularity and adaptability.

There is much to be learned about the different varieties. Their yielding, keeping and shipping qualities are important to the commercial grower, but he must also take into consideration flavor and many other characteristics. We shall attempt to give our readers further comment along this line in future issues.

Those living outside the districts mentioned should inform themselves as to the hardiness of different varieties before purchasing trees for setting. Space would not permit of a detailed description of the different kinds in this article.

POULTRY.

The Quality of Birds to use for Breeding.

EDITOR "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE":

Taking it for granted you have a pure-bred and properly cared for flock of poultry, as every up-to-date farmer should have, the time has now arrived for selecting the breeds from which to hatch next spring's crop of chickens. Do you hope for improvement, increase in egg production, larger, better-shaped and marked birds? Then, take time right now, if possible before

February 15, to pick out your choicest birds for the 1917 breeders and give them a separate house and special care to insure fertile eggs and strong, vigorous chicks.

A breeding pen of the heavier varieties should contain 7 to 10, general-purpose breeds 12 to 15, and Mediterranean breeds 20 to 25 females to one male. If you cannot get this number of good birds, use fewer, rather than breed from even one inferior specimen.

Choose one-year-old hens or fully matured pullets which possess at least these three essential qualities: health, typical shape and winter laying proclivities. Birds that have a full, well-rounded breast, broad, deep body of good length, a bright eye and are always found busy from dawn till dark should be chosen.

To determine which are the best layers, watch the flock very closely for a few days in mid-winter, to see which birds are the layers and put a leg-band on each as found. These winter layers are the birds wanted in the breeding pen, for they are the heaviest yearly producers, and consequently the most profitable from the egg standpoint.

About the most important things to consider in the male bird for the pen is vigor. Without vigor it is impossible to secure a high percentage of fertile eggs and strong healthy chickens. Do not inbreed by using a male from your own pen, no matter how perfect he may be. Secure a cockerel, bred along the same lines as your females and strong in any points wherein your birds may be weak, from some reliable breeder.

When the pen is mated, see that the birds have every advantage in the way of clean drinking water, a supply of grit, lime, green feed and an open front scratch ing shed facing the south, with a deep litter of coarse straw, wherein small quantities of grain are scattered at intervals during the day to keep the birds working, thereby insuring perfect health. For best results, do not hatch eggs from this pen for three or four weeks after mating. It will take that length of time for a strange male to get acquainted and accustomed to his new surroundings. Hence mate early, not later than February 15, if you wish chickens in April and early May, which is the very best time for hatching chickens on the farm.

Northumberland Co., Ontario UNCLE ELI.

Selecting and Mating on a Poultry Plant that Pays.

Poultry is kept on practically every farm, but there is no proof that it always pays its way, and yet few farmers would care to be without a few fowl to supply fresh eggs during a part of the year at least. The average hen commences laying in early spring, and when she has deposited 60 or 70 eggs in a nest and raised a clutch of chicks considers she has done a good year's work. Comparing her production with that of the hen of a half century ago she does well, but when compared with some of her present-day bred-to-lay sisters her record falls far short of the possible, and of what should be expected from a well-bred, carefully fed, properly housed pullet or yearling hen. On some farms where a good deal of attention is given, the poultry returns show that it pays as high or higher dividends on money invested than do other branches of farming. Poultry is like every other class of live stock, it requires attention in order to make it pay.

Many small flocks of poultry are kept in the back yards in towns and cities, and it is not uncommon to hear of a flock of 10 birds making a net profit of \$1.00 or \$1.50 per bird from sale of eggs alone—one bird \$1.00 profit, 100 birds \$100, and 1,000 birds \$1,000. These figures look good on paper, and having found no difficulty in clearing one dollar per bird in cramped quarters, the poultry enthusiast reasons that he should be able to do even better with his birds on open range. Many make plans for starting poultry raising on a large scale, and invest all their savings in land, buildings and birds, and move the family to the country with the expectation that it is only a matter of a few years until a small fortune will be made. All too often it proves to be a case of counting the chickens before they are hatched. The profits per bird in a commercial flock are not always on a par with those of a small flock. The reasons are obvious; the same personal attention cannot be given the birds; it is more difficult to keep disease out of a large flock, and it is almost impossible to have the average egg production of a flock of 1,000 birds anywhere near as high

as with a flock of 10 birds. The result is that Canada depends largely on the farm flock for her supply of eggs. Only a few men appear capable of managing a commercial flock.

Lewis N. Clark is one man who is proving that it is possible to make big profits out of poultry. He is manager of Oldham Poultry Farm, or rather egg factory, which occupies 37½ acres of land a short distance from Port Hope. Starting with 500 birds 7 years ago the

has resulted in the Leghorn pullets averaging 176 eggs at a cost of 14 cents a dozen in 1916, and Barred Rock pullets producing 169 eggs at a cost of 17½ cents a dozen the same year. Considering the large flock this is an exceptionally high average, and goes to show the possibilities in egg production. Suitable, clean, light, dry, well-ventilated buildings are provided and the birds appear happy and contented. The manager of either a large or small flock of poultry might well follow some of the methods practiced by Mr. Clark to secure large profits from his investment.

The thermometer registered considerably below zero, and a howling blizzard was blowing from the north the morning a representative of "The Farmer's Advocate" visited Oldham Poultry Plant. Under these climatic conditions the average bird would have no notion of laying, but the birds on this farm were hard at work in spite of the cold. In every pen the nests were full, and birds waiting for their turn to lay. It was a sight to bring a happy smile to any poultryman's face, but it was nothing new to Mr. Clark, because he was accustomed to enter the pens at any time of the day from October to March and see the birds on duty. The main revenue on this farm comes from the sale of market eggs, although a large number of eggs are sold for breeding purposes, and to meet the growing demand large incubators are being installed to supply day-old chicks.

Buildings.

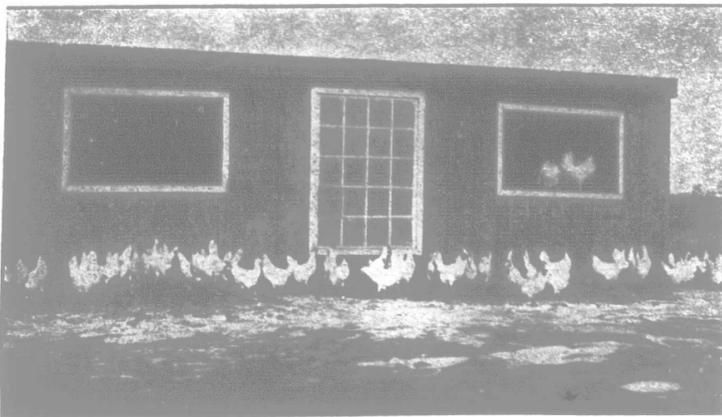
The long, continuous houses, partitioned off into



Poultry Houses on Oldham Farm.

workers have been increased to about 3,200 and ample accommodation is provided for them. Mr. Clark employed in 1916 in the neighborhood of 2,800 White Leghorns and 400 Barred Plymouth Rocks. Efficiency is the motto, and all pullets which fail to produce a certain number of eggs during the winter months when prices are high, are never kept the second year. Commencing work when between 5 and 6 months of age, a pullet is required to lay at least 115 eggs from October 1 to February 28, if she would have the distinction of being placed in the breeding pen when a yearling. This is a high standard, but with careful mating and selection it

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A Few of Mr. Clark's Heavy-producing Leghorns.



Barred Rocks which Lay Well for Mr. Clark.