

Keeping Milk Records.

The keeping of milk records of our dairy cows is, I think, a subject which is deserving of more attention than it receives at the present time. How many farmers there are who know nothing as a certainty as to what any individual cow is doing for him; or, in fact, whether the cow is working for him, or he for the cow? "I can't be bothered; I have not the time; or, oh, I have a pretty good idea," are among the reasons given for not keeping records. But, in fact, it is not so much bother, and it does not take so much time as many suppose; for after you weigh your milk a few times, you can form a pretty good estimate of what you have in your pail, and so know pretty near where to place the ball of your scale; or if you have a spring balance you have simply to hang the pail on and the weight is indicated. I would like to urge farmers to try this for the coming season, and I know from experience that they will be surprised in the result.

A board fixed with a groove at the side for the frame, in which two pieces of glass are fixed, with a space of about three-quarters of an inch apart to slide up or down in, is with a sheet of paper all that is necessary, with a lead pencil attached with a string to keep from losing. The reason for putting in glass is that it is much easier kept clean.

THOS. JOHNSON.

Perth Co., Ont.

POULTRY.

An Item on Geese.

To be successful in raising geese a house is necessary. Ours, and it gives good satisfaction, is eight by sixteen feet. It is a lean-to, on the east side of the hen-house. The door is in the north end, opening into the barnyard. There is a window in the south end, and one on the east side. To the east and south of the house lies a yard fenced with woven wire, and connected with the interior of the house by a small side door. By this arrangement I can let the geese out for exercise, sun and air, and can prevent other animals getting into the house. In this house I keep three geese and one pure-bred gander. When they begin to lay, I clean out the nests and put in straw or chaff. Every day after this I give them each a piece of bread, of which they are very fond; also, give them a pail of fresh water every night. I number the eggs every day, roll them in cloth, and put them in a cool place where I can turn them every twenty-four hours, until the first goose is ready to set. I always try to have the goslings come out all together. If one goose gets broody before the others I just give her a china egg to keep warm until the others get ready. They all generally get broody within a week; then I give each her share of the eggs—about a dozen each. By this means I have often lifted the three geese on a morning and found a nestful of green goslings under each. When handling the geese, I take them by the neck and tail, and lift them right out of the nest, as by so doing the eggs or goslings are not injured. When the goslings are thirty-six hours old I level off the floor of the pen, put clean straw all over it, and lift the geese and goslings to the floor, and board up their nests. None of my pets like this treatment, but it has to be done. Goslings are easily lost from their mothers, and soon perish if not watched closely. I feed them with bread soaked in milk. I never give young goslings either milk or water to drink, unless it be occasionally a drink of water out of a plate, then take it right away, as I have learned by experience that water is death to young goslings. I have a pail of water in the house for the old geese. Never feed the goslings new bread. In winter I feed the old geese on grain once a day and pulped turnips. I think geese are less trouble than any other kind of poultry. I am fortunate in having a good gander, who protects both eggs and goslings from rats or other intruders.

JENNIE.

Poultry-raising on Ten Acres.

We have had this question put to us, "Would it pay to go into poultry-raising with only ten acres of land, thus having to buy all the feed?" We have answered similar questions several times before. Success in poultry-raising never depends upon one single condition, such as extent of land, breed of birds, etc.; there are a whole combination of circumstances that go to make success. If one knows the business, the feeding, mating, hatching, marketing, etc., the question of size of plots is not of much importance. Of course, the location should be dry, warm, and well protected from the winds. To any one contemplating going into poultry-raising, or any other business, we would say, first know your ground by experience. If experience has to be got, get it as cheaply as possible by starting in a small way, and increase as fast as circumstances will permit.

Has the address label on your Farmer's Advocate been changed to 1904? If not, your subscription remains unpaid. Kindly remit at once.

The Hatching Season.

[Condensed from Bulletin issued by the Maine Agr. Exp. Station.]

THE NATURAL METHOD.

Circumstances sometimes make it necessary to hatch and raise chickens by aid of the mother hen. While we do not like the method, we have practiced it. A room was set apart solely for use of the brooding hens. Along one side a platform was made three feet above the floor, two and a half feet wide and fifty feet long. It was divided into fifty little stalls or nests, each one foot wide, two feet long, and one foot high. This left a six-inch walk along in front for the hens to light on when flying up from the floor. Each nest had a low partition dividing it, so that the nesting material would be kept in the back end, while the front gave the hen a place to stand in where she would not break the eggs. For early spring work, paper was put in the bottom of the nest, then an inch or two of dry earth, and on that a nest of soft hay. Each compartment was also provided with a door made of laths at the front. When hens became broody, they were put in these places, with a dummy egg to sit upon; then, if contented, in a couple of days each was given 13 eggs instead of the dummy. If a hen proved to be a bad sitter, she was exchanged for a better one. Little trouble was experienced with the hens. Every morning they would come down and burrow in the dry dust on the floor, eat, drink and take exercise, and in about fifteen minutes nearly all would return to their nests voluntarily. On the whole, the experiment was satisfactory, and were it not for the lice, which were not easily got rid of, since the chicks grew with the mother hen, we would prefer it to some incubators we have used. . . . For the hen and her brood the best arrangement consists of a close coop, about thirty inches square, with a hinged roof and a movable floor in two parts, which can be taken out each day for cleaning. Attached to the coop is a wire-enclosed yard, 4 ft. by 5 ft. in size, and 1½ ft. high. The frame of this yard is securely fastened to the coop, so that the whole may be easily moved to clean grass by one person. The small run is sufficient for a few weeks, then when the chicks need a greater range the farther end of the run can be lifted up three or four inches, so that the chicks can pass in and out at will, while the mother will be secure. Such a coop accommodates 15 to 20 chicks until they no longer require brooding, after which several flocks are combined in one and put in a portable poultry-house on a grassy range. . . . Whenever the above method is adopted, insect powder must be used freely upon the hen, and shaken right through the feathers to the skin. Grease or oil is effective when applied to the heads and under the wings of young chicks, but care must be taken not to put too much of it on them.

THE ARTIFICIAL METHOD.

There are many advantages in using a good incubator. A 360-egg machine will do the work of nearly 30 hens, and can be kept at work continually if desired. A cellar is a good place in which to run incubators, if it is not cold, but it is necessary, wherever they are kept, to keep the room constant in temperature. Machines that have automatic turning shelves will not hold quite as many eggs as those that contain flat shelves, but the saving of time gained by using them is of importance. . . . We use indoor brooders mostly, and very much prefer them to any outside brooders we have seen. The portable brooder houses are built on runners, so that they may be readily moved about. The houses are 12 ft. long, some of them are 6 ft. and others 7 ft. wide. They are 6 ft. high in front, and 4 ft. high at the back. The frame is of 2x3 inch stuff; the floor is double boarded. The building is boarded, papered and shingled all over. A door 2 ft. wide is in the center of the front, and a six-light sliding window on each side of it. A small slide is put in the door near the top, by which ventilation can be obtained early in the season before the windows can be kept open. Two brooders are placed in each of these houses, and 50 to 60 chicks are put with each brooder. . . . About the 20th of June the grass is cut on some field near to the poultry buildings, and the brooder houses are drawn out onto it. The chickens are shut into small yards adjoining the houses for about a week, after which they are allowed to run together. . . . Most kinds of brooders as now made keep the chicks comfortable at desired temperatures, and have good means of ventilation. The great difficulty lies in the lamps used. The lamp apartments are small, and the tendency is for the oil to become warm and form gases, which causes the flame to stream up and make trouble. Most brooder lamps have water pans between the oil tank and the burner, which tend to keep the oil cool, but another kind, which have no water-pans, but are so arranged that currents of cool air pass constantly over the oil tank and keep it cool, we regard as perfectly safe.

Early Incubator Hatches.

I sent the "Farmer's Advocate" an account of my last year's hatches. I would like now to report on the first one this year. I set one hundred and seven eggs on February 16th. Many of these eggs were laid when the thermometer registered several degrees below zero, and I have no artificial heat in my henhouse. On testing them at the end of one week, I took out twelve clear eggs, and there were seven doubtful ones. When they hatched, only one chicken died in the shell after it had started to chip it, but there were more that died at about the end of the second week. Forty-eight chickens hatched, but some were lame and a few weak. I proved to my entire satisfaction that it is perfectly safe to open the incubator door occasionally whilst the chicks are hatching and give a helping hand to them if they are caught in the shell. My experience is that I have more time to feed and attend to little chicks now than I will have when the cows are coming in and the garden work beginning and the spring cleaning, and also from a monetary point of view it is a grand thing to have early March chickens. I look forward to plenty of fresh eggs this year before Christmas.

TRIX.

Carleton Co., Ont.

Another correspondent says: "Let me tell you an experiment we made in January. On January 4th, I started an incubator with one hundred and seven eggs (the same quantity as Trix had). These eggs had travelled two hundred miles by express, and this is, right off, a drawback, especially when the weather was so cold. These eggs were started in a Chatham incubator, and at the end of five days I found that sixty-two were infertile, and I left in the machine forty-five good eggs. At the end of twenty-one days I got forty-three good, vigorous chickens, and at present I have forty-three strong chickens, which are two months old, but, of course, I never opened the door until they were all hatched, and I have proved to my satisfaction, as well as by results, that the best way is to leave the door closed for the entire time of the hatching process."

JOS. ROOHL COTE.

APIARY.

Heavy Losses Among Bees.

By Morley Pettit.

The winter just passed has been a record one in every way. The wintering of bees is no exception. From personal enquiries, I believe at least half the bees in the Province are dead and the balance considerably weakened.

The causes of this heavy loss are not far to seek. The fall honey flow in most places was very light, and hives which were not filled up for the winter were consequently short of stores. On account of the excessive and continued cold, the bees were compelled to draw heavily on their stores, and many colonies ran short and starved. Eating so much to keep up animal heat and having no thorough cleansing flight for nearly five months brought on dysentery and death to others. Often the great amount of snow was a detriment. Although it helps keep the bees warm, it is liable to choke the hive entrance and smother them.

Bees wintered in cellars and other repositories have fared much better than have those left out of doors. In fact, they have probably wintered as well as usual, for the shortage of stores and low temperature will be counterbalanced by the uniform temperature at which the cellar could be kept while the weather was so steadily cold outside. The trouble usually experienced in cellar wintering is to keep the temperature low enough, and it is very important to have it uniform.

Beekkeepers will be wise to look to their hives now to be sure each is well supplied with feed to carry it through till honey comes. In spite of all warning, there will likely be heavy loss by starvation during the next two months.

Mould in Hives.

1. I packed some bees outside in a box, using sawdust instead of straw. Most of them came through the winter, but some died in the spring with honey in the hive. Some of the combs are mouldy. Did the mould kill them?
2. When they are set out in the spring will the mould all have to be removed?
3. Are top stories used on Jones' hives?
4. When using two stories, do you extract any from the lower story?
5. What kind of a smoker is the best to buy?

Ans.—1. The mould did not kill the bees. It is an indication of the dampness, which is injurious to bees wintered out of doors. Sawdust is considered a good winter packing, much better than straw, if it can be kept dry; but it is much more subject to dampness, and does not dry out readily, and, of course, a damp packing is cold and unhealthy. If procurable, there is nothing better than forest leaves, and next to that wheat chaff.

As to the cause of death, that is uncertain. The hives may have been queenless in the fall, and without a queen bees do not cluster well, and usually die in winter or dwindle out in spring. Their stores may have been scattered in the hive, and without proper passage ways through or over the combs, in the continued severe weather of last