

The floor should be covered with litter which should be frequently renewed, or at least covered by an addition of fresh litter. Geese delight in cleanliness, it is essential to their well-being. A pond or stream is an advantage, but not absolutely necessary. Geese raised near a body of water are much better looking and more thrifty than others. Their feathers are of a finer quality and as the feathers are one of the products, this condition should not be overlooked.

*Breeding Stock.*—A gander will mate with several females. It is better to have as few males as possible in the poultry yard so as to avoid quarrels and fights as the ganders may waste their energy to such an extent that they may be useless as breeders. Geese should be mated early in the fall, for if the mating is delayed too long there is risk that females will not produce anything during the year. Goslings or yearlings are poor breeders; two-year-old birds are better and although geese may live to a great age, they are only in the best possible breeding condition at from three to five years of age.

*Feeding Adult Birds.*—Variety should be observed in feeding. Geese have a special liking for grass and green foods. They do well on all sorts of grain and clovers as well as on cooked vegetables or fruit. They must have a run of some sort but do not require a very large space. They may be kept in part of a field until they have eaten all the grass, then transferred to another part of the same field. Geese should never be pastured in seeded fields as they do great damage by eating the plants right down to the crown. They dig into the heart of the plant with their bill, which is toothed like a saw, and destroy vegetation. Their droppings, which are very caustic, burn the plants. They should not be left at large in pastures kept for farm animals.

*LAYING AND INCUBATION.*—When the goose walks around, holding straws or bits of wood in her beak, it is a sign that laying time is near. It is best then to provide her with a pile of soft straw in which she may dig and hide her eggs. The eggs should be removed as soon as laid so as to avoid chilling, but, one or two dummy eggs should always be left in the nest so that the goose may not see that the eggs are being taken away, as she would then go elsewhere.

When ready to set some ten to fifteen eggs should be put in the nest which should be almost flat, placed on the ground and spacious, so that the sitter may be quite comfortable, and in a secluded place where she will not be disturbed by any one. It is also better to keep the gander away during sitting time as he might disturb the goose and annoy the person in charge.

While sitting, the goose should be given pure water, grain and green food. Some breeders, during the first few days, carefully lift the goose from the nest to make her eat; in doing so care should be taken to see that no egg is retained under the wings. When she leaves her nest to feed, etc., she covers the eggs with down, feathers or with bits of straw.

Hatching takes about forty-eight hours. Experience has shown that it is best to let the goslings break through the shells unaided. By helping them there is danger of fatally injuring them; through the membranes being prematurely ruptured, bleeding to death may easily take place.

*REARING.*—Goslings should be removed one by one, as they hatch, so as to prevent the mother from leaving the nest before the hatch is over. They should be placed in a basket, lined with cotton or wool, or in a brooder.

When hatching is over give the goslings to the mother who will watch over them with great care; the gander may then be allowed with the mother as he helps her and protects the young ones very tenderly.