



THE SIMPLE LIFE



WITH THE POULTRYMAN THE FOUNDATION OF THE POULTRY INDUSTRY



FTER all, eggs are the foundation of the great poultry industry. The consumption of eggs in this country is something wonderful; the demand is comparatively great. In fact, the demand exceeds the supply. It matters not whether you are in the poultry business for fancy or for market purposes—eggs are at the bottom of the whole matter—results are what count and are what you want. If you have a breed of chickens that is clothed with the richest of Nature's arts and it were known that they were nonlayers, what profit would they be? What would attract the attention of the prospective buyer? The writer has observed in several instances when a prospective buyer of some of the standard varieties was searching the show room for a breed of fowls which satisfied his fancy, in approaching the coops containing an attractive variety of fowls, the prospective buyer invariably inquires as they good winter layers, or possibly asks the question in a broader sense and boldly inquires if such a variety of fowls are good egg producers. It is the egg supply that makes the poultry business interesting and active. It has been said that "one might just as well be dead as to be out of fashion." The same is true in the poultry business. One might just as well be dead as to try to attract attention with a breed that is known to be a poor egg producer.

How many of us ever stop to consider that success depends upon attention? Attention to the minor details in the keeping of fowls during the summer and fall months means much towards a satisfactory egg yield during the winter months. Eggs are not a matter of luck as some suppose. Very frequently we hear the pessimist say: "We just haven't had any luck in getting eggs this winter." The writer has never yet discovered a variety of fowls that "just happened to lay." The fowls that lay are those that receive intelligent attention.

But remember we are living in a fast age. It keeps us all hustling to keep up all the details, especially those that have serious enterprises to look after, consequently some of the details of the poultry business lose attention. Everyone doubtless understands that if eggs are expected the fowls must have special attention now during the moulting period. Nothing is of more importance than that of giving them special attention during the early fall and late summer months while the fowls are preparing to dress up in their new winter styles. It is not expected that the fowls will continue to lay during moulting but we expect them to lay during the early fall and throughout the winter months. They will not only require plenty of food during the moulting season, but it must be food of the proper kind. Webster defines the word "food" as that which gives nourishment, hence the food given to fowls should be sweet and wholesome and not stale, because of its cheapness. The writer has long since learned that a well fed animal or fowl pays the largest dividend and at no time does it pay better to feed fowls than during the moulting, but as a rule that is the time when most fowls are neglected. If the fowls do not receive attention during the moulting there can be nothing but failure in egg production later on. Our experience has been that fowls that are well fed during the moulting begin laying promptly as soon as the new feathers are well grown and continue to lay throughout the winter. The reason your hens did not lay last winter was because you did not give them the proper attention early in the season. Possibly you gave them careful attention just at the time you expected them to begin laying, but you were too late. The time to prepare for winter eggs is in August, September and October. Get the fowls in proper condition early before cold weather appears and we guarantee, if you continue to give them intelligent attention throughout the winter, you will have no room to complain of a shortage in your egg crop. An egg you know is not a simple matter when viewed from a scientific point but is composed of a variety of substances. Likewise the food for hens must necessarily be composed of a variety of substances. The practice of feeding a bulky feed exclusively, such as thrashed oats, and expecting a satisfactory supply of eggs certainly will prove a disappointment. It's the feed and management that compels the hens to lay out of season as well as in season. No matter how many prizes your fowls have won at the leading shows, if you fail to get eggs from them their value is very much diminished. It's the eggs that make the fowls profitable. True a long line of winnings behind an individual places him at the top round in the poultry world, but from a commercial point of view the better egg laying strain we have the more valuable is the strain. This egg record will effect the fancy as well, because the poultryman will understand the importance of having a well established egg record behind the reputation of his strain. As stated previously, the egg supply is at the foundation of the whole matter. Look into the matter a little bit during the fall months and note the marked results throughout the winter months when prices for eggs are ruling supreme.

CULLING THE FLOCK FOR PROFIT

There are very few flocks of hens in this country which do not contain a number of unprofitable hens. These are hens which are not good layers, or those which have lived past the profitable age.

It is almost impossible for the general poultry keeper to select his best layers without he uses the trapnet, and a good many, mistakenly, think trapnetting is a tedious and time-taking method of keeping tabs on the hens. The poultryman who once gets in the habit of trapnetting his hens will not give it up without regret and through the force of circumstances, but not withstanding the value of this method there are comparatively few who will adopt it.

Unfortunately, the hen that lays few eggs is often the best appearing one in the flock. She has no strain on her vital system and keeps in good plumage, flesh and appearance long after her sister, who is producing eggs regularly, becomes faded and ragged in plumage and out of the trim shape of the pullet.

It has been fully demonstrated that hens are not profitable after they have passed their second summer. To make the most money out of hens they should be brought up to laying form the fall after they are hatched; kept laying through the winter and on into the next summer and then sold. This does not apply to hens kept for breeding purposes. Hens of good blood and high-scoring qualities should be kept as long as they lay at all, as the chicks from old hens are stronger than those from pullets. We are now referring to hens kept for market purposes, and these rapidly lose in the power to make profits after one year of laying.

The time to sell hens which have been culled out to make room for pullets is immediately after they have ceased to lay in the fall or late summer. They are then about ready to moulting and this will make three months of the idleness during which time they must be fed if kept.

Select these old hens and put them in a rather small run. Give them all the pure water they will drink and plenty of grit. Then feed them gradually increasing quantities of cracked corn until they are eating all they will of it. Feed these hens in this way for about two weeks and it will be found that they have become very fat and plump. They will have put on considerable weight and when sent to the table the flesh will be found sweet and tender, like that of a young chicken. The fat will have formed between the fibres of the muscular flesh, and when a hen is cooked the fat melts and leaves the flesh very tender.

If one lives near a town, one can soon get the very best prices for hens finished in this way and by putting them up a few at a time one can sell all the culled at something more than the regular market price. Such hens sent to an honest commission merchant, with a letter stating that they have been specially fattened for table use, will generally result in a very satisfactory sale, as the cities appreciate tender fowls and are willing to pay a price for them.

SPROUTED GRAINS AS FEED

Such grains as oats, wheat and barley increase considerably in bulk when soaked, and if first soaked for a day and then spread out in a warm place, and kept damp will soon throw out long sprouts, which still further increase the bulk of the feed available. In the process of sprouting certain chemical changes take place. In order that a grain may germinate, heat, water and atmospheric air are necessary. The water softens the grain, the carbon unites with the oxygen of the air and carbon dioxide is liberated. The starch changes to a compound closely resembling sugar and the embryo plant begins growth, living on the material of which the grain is composed until the rootlet can strike into the soil and seek plant food there. Sprouting grain does not increase the quantity of nutritive material which it originally contained, but it so changes it that it becomes more palatable and there is some reason for believing, more nutritious. It seems that the process of germination in some manner predigests some of the elements of nutrition contained in the grain so that a larger percentage of it is assimilated, thus making it more valuable.

Recently the writer has had an opportunity to observe some of the effects of feeding sprouted grains to chicks. Wheat, so mixed with light soil as to make a layer of wheat and soil almost two inches in depth, was moistened and covered with burlap bags to prevent too rapid evaporation. In a few days the grains of wheat had sprouted and a coat of green leaves covered the soil. A flock of young chicks was then given access to this mass of sprouted grain and as long as it lasted they could not be tempted to eat ordinary wheat, except in very small quantities.

During the summer when tender green stuff is hard to get, grain sprouted in this way could be made to serve the purpose of both grain and green stuff. If a place were smoothed off where the ground is hard and the sun had free access during the day, covered with a light layer of fine soil into which wheat was mixed and kept damp, using some light cloth for a covering to retain the moisture, it would be only a short time until the grain

would throw up green sprouts and then the soil could be shoveled up and thrown where the hens could dig the grain out of it; a thing they would most willingly do. Another way would be to put the grain in a box and thoroughly wet it, allowing it to remain until well swelled. After this it might be moved by stirring; keeping it just damp enough to prevent it from drying out, but not wet enough to produce molds or heat enough to rot it. The stirring would prevent any part of it from overheating and when the sprouts start out they could be allowed to grow until an inch long and then be fed to the hens.

Any method by which grain can be started into growth would seem, from our recent observations, to be palatable to growing chicks as well as mature fowls and it is certain the chicks are growing rapidly on this feed. They are turned out and fed in the morning, but they require very little ordinary grain, rushing in a body to the place where they can dig out the sprouting grain.

Wheat, oats, corn, barley or kafir corn, even when soaked for only a few hours, are preferred to dry grains of the same kind. It is very little trouble to soak grain for chicken feed and we believe it would pay any one to feed grain in this manner during the hot weather at least.

PRESERVING EGGS

There is no secret about the method by which eggs may be preserved in perfectly good condition for many months. The process is a very simple one which anyone can carry out with perfect success. It consists in putting the eggs in a solution of sodium silicate and water. Sodium silicate is commonly known as waterglass and any druggist can get it from his wholesale supply house. This waterglass is made by fusing for five or six hours a mixture of carbonate of potash, quartz and charcoal. The mass is then pulverized and boiled in water until it is a thick, syrup-like liquid. It costs anywhere from 15 cents to 75 cents a gallon, according to location and ideas about the profit that should be made selling it. A gallon mixed with ten gallons of water should be enough for about fifty dozen eggs. The water should first be boiled and cooled and the waterglass added. Put this in stone jars or a very clean keg and add the eggs as gathered, being careful not to put in any spoiled ones or any with cracked shells. Keep the eggs covered with the solution and they will keep perfectly sweet and fresh for months. A year ago we gave the method of preserving eggs to a lady and she tried it with perfect success. She put down the eggs in the summer and during the winter sold them for nearly four times what she could have got for them at the time they were put down. The eggs should be wiped when taken out of the solution. They should be sold for just what they are and will command a good price in any market.

THE MOULTING SEASON

An exchange remarks that a moulting hen is a pitiful sight. We do not understand why such a remark should be made. Moulting is a perfectly natural process and a moulting hen is only being prepared by nature with a new and perfectly covering for the approaching cold weather.

If a hen is kept through the summer in good condition and comes up to the moulting season in vigorous health, she will moult easily, naturally and rapidly. It is a sign of a good poultryman to see hens drop their feathers quickly and become naked. There are individual hens which moult slowly. Such hens are rarely the best layers and they are sluggish by nature and slow workers as layers.

A few years ago much was said about forcing the moult. This was done by starving the hens for a short time, then putting them on full feed again. There is no doubt that this method induces a quick moult in most cases, but its value is doubted by those who have given the matter close attention. Starving a hen is not now thought to be a very good way to increase her productiveness, even if she is fed to the limit later. Good authorities are now inclined to say that forcing the moult is not a paying method of treating hens at this season. They prefer to go by the natural method and select for breeders those hens which, under the best conditions of care and feeding, moult in the shortest time.

We have never tried the forcing method of moulting and at this writing have no intention of ever trying it. We believe in letting nature take its course in this matter as in many others. Nature understands how to perform her work pretty thoroughly. To be sure, under the condition of domestication we must vary considerably from the natural state, because we have taken the hen from her native country and for thousands of years have bred her under conditions which make it necessary for us to resort to methods varying widely from those under which the primeval hen lived.

No doubt the ancient law of the survival of the fittest served a purpose by selecting only those individuals which were strongest and best fitted to perform the duty of continuing the species.

Under domestication the weak and worthless are preserved as well as the strong and vigorous and it becomes necessary for the poultryman to exercise his knowledge of the science of breeding and select only those which are best adapted to the purposes for which he keeps his fowls. He must select those which moult in the fewest days if he

desires the most productive flock. The moulting season is a time of unproductiveness and idleness. If one hen finishes her moult in seventy days and another in 100 days, it does not require much skill to know which of the two is most likely to be profitable or most profitable.

Keep the hens in prime condition up to the beginning of the moulting season and during the period of moulting feed them the most nourishing feed that can be secured. Give them meat in some form, a liberal supply of corn, and feed oats and wheat plentifully. Feathers are very rich in the nitrogenous compounds and meat, bran, middlings and oats are the best feeds to supply the nitrogen which goes so largely into the composition of feathers. Take good care of the hens during the moulting season and they will pay you for your extra trouble when they begin to lay again.—Poultry.

PREPARING POULTRY FOR EXHIBITION

Mating for good results and fitting for the showroom is a very fitting pastime, which can be also made very profitable. I often think it a pity that farmers who show fowl at local shows don't put them out in better condition. Those same farmers would not think of taking horses or cattle in poor shape, and although at a summer show the fowl are often in full moult, much can be done to make them look better. If your local show should be in the fall, the moulting can all be over with. If you pick your birds, and feed very light for, say, two weeks, on free range, then shut them up and feed very heavily on wheat, oats, a little barley, green food and beef scraps, besides a little flaxseed, you will soon see the feathers drop and new ones take their places. One of the very best feather-making foods is wheat and a plentiful supply of beef scraps. When you have done the best you can in this way, if your birds are a year or more old, choose all your young show stock and commence fitting. If they are white birds, give plenty of straw to keep them clean. Don't attempt washing unless you understand it, or your birds will look like the boiled shirt which a certain bachelor tried to wash. The day before the show is a good time to start getting the birds ready. Have a clean pen to put them in after you get through; take a small nail brush, after making some good soaps, and proceed to wash the legs and feet first; stand the bird in the dish and soak well for a minute or two; then work to scrub off the dirt. Don't pick out a bird with scaly legs, but if you have a particularly good specimen with scaly legs, dip its legs in coal oil for two or three minutes about a week before the show. After washing the legs well, if you can spare the time, take a toothpick and pick out all the black from between the scales. This is very important if you wish to exhibit at a winter fair. Next take a piece of chamois or other soft leather and polish the legs well. Next, if the sickles or curved tail-feathers have a dragged appearance, wash them in warm soft water; when dried and fluffed out it will add wonderfully to a male's appearance. Take a piece of soft cloth, and wash the comb and wattles in warm soft water; use castile soap, and be careful not to rub too hard; then dry and apply a dressing of vaseline. If your birds are a white-lobed breed, and the weather has reddened them a little, get a little zinc ointment and rub well in. Sometimes you see a good specimen which has a beak growing too fast on one side, or a toe-nail growing too long or out of shape. Take a sharp pen-knife and trim carefully to the proper shape.

If you wish to prepare your birds for a winter show, it is important to begin right from the moulting season. Give abundance of shade, and the feathers will come in nice and dark, with a good lustre. Feed liberally, and don't forget to keep down the lice, for you cannot have a good plumage where lice abound; then, again, nothing looks worse than to see lice running ahead of the judge's hand, as he runs his hand through the feathers.

Remember that it isn't always the largest bird which wins at a show. I would sooner have a good-shaped specimen one-half pound under weight, than an extra-large bird off on shape. I think a great many breeders pay too much attention to comb on show birds. I have often had farmers remark, while looking over my drove of Tamworth pigs, that they didn't like that long nose. Well, probably it isn't a thing of beauty, but to me it is one of the least-important items, as we never eat the nose. So with show fowl, pick out your best-shaped bird first, then see that you are good on color, for a bird is judged on color in a great many different places. Then look to the comb and legs. Follow out these rules, and the other fellow must then produce a better bird to beat you.—H. E. Waby.

DOCTORING FOWLS

A prominent authority on poultry states that "to succeed in doctoring a stubborn case of sickness of a persistent epidemic in his flock, is one of the worst misfortunes that can befall a poultry keeper," meaning thereby that it is much better, from the dollar and cent standpoint, for the poultryman to kill fowls as soon as they exhibit symptoms of disease, than it is to potter about and endeavor to treat the infected birds.

As a general rule this advice holds good. Unless a man can detect the trouble, diagnose the disease and apply treatment in the early

stages of sickness it is seldom that doctoring is of much avail. If he manages once or twice to be successful in checking a mild epidemic or curing an individual case here or there, he gets into the habit of fussing about his fowls, doctoring them up when they get sick and usually ends up by getting his place stocked up with a lot of birds of enfeebled constitutions predisposed to disease. A little knowledge of the different fowl diseases is essential to success in poultry raising, but more as a means of detecting disorders in the early stages than for applying remedies to cure the trouble. The one fact that a poultry man wants to be able to grasp firmly is that when once disease becomes established in his flock the best thing he can do is use a good sharp hatchet pretty vigorously. In the long run it will prove more profitable than all the drugs in the world.

AROUND THE FARM

MATCHING FARM TEAMS



MATCHING horses is an art, and an art which quite a number of farmers and horsemen seem unable to master. It requires some skill and judgment to bring together a pair of horses that resemble each other in all characteristics sufficiently to work in harmony. A man has to have more than the color of the animals in mind to do this successfully. To have a team closely alike in color and markings is desirable, but it's not the whole thing as some men seem to think.

Action comes first when considering the mating of horses. Proper action, strong, clean, vigorous, movement of feet and legs attracts a buyer more quickly than anything else. Style is required in the action of any class of horse. A snappy, straight and balanced movement of the motive apparatus, a team, each of which stands up to the bit in about the same way, are attractive to buyers and pleasing to the man who drives them.

In a farm team strength and conformation might possibly be placed before action, at any rate it should come second. A team ill matched in regard to strength and staying powers is a mighty poor asset. In selecting horses to work against each other in a team, get them in general conformation as nearly alike as possible, good and strong behind, and muscled well in the back and loin, short and thick in the middle, with muscles, not fat beneath the hide. Size to a certain extent may be sacrificed for strength and conformation, but only within certain limits. A difference of a hundred pounds or so in weight doesn't matter much when a pair is being matched up, but if much more than that, the difference in size will be too clear and detract from the value of the team. Size is important, but it comes after strength, just as strength and conformation follow action in relative importance. Color comes last of all in the major points to be considered. A difference in color, however marked, is among the least objectionable features in a team. Yet strangely, some men consider it the all important consideration, and will match up horses so unlike in action and temperament, that one's whippetree is always scouring the wagon wheel, while the other is drawing ahead keen and strong to the bit, so unlike in strength and conformation that one is fagged out hours before the other shows fatigue; but if the two stand about the same in height, weight up very nearly alike, and resemble each other in color and markings, they are rated as a well matched team. In reality they are anything but matched.

NOTES ON CALF RAISING

A comparison of skim-milk calves and sucking calves was made at the Nebraska experiment station and the calves kept under observation for 147 days. In that time the average gain of skim-milk calves was 292 pounds and sucking calves 343 pounds. The amount of gain in this test was in favor of whole milk, but a greater economy was shown in the use of skim milk.

Calves intended for dairy cows are the better for being raised on a rather non-fattening ration. A good practice is to give such calves whole milk for a month or six weeks, substituting during the last two weeks skim milk so that by the time the calves are a month and a half old their drink is entirely skim milk. Grain should be fed after they are four weeks old. Ground oats are excellent as a grain feed.

At the Kansas experimental station tests were made in comparing the feeding value of pasteurized skim milk and fresh separator milk for calves. The results show that there is little difference in the value of these materials in calf feeding. Calves at first may show a dislike to the cooked flavor of the pasteurized milk but soon take to it readily. It has no ill effects upon the digestive system, in fact, in this respect is less dangerous than skim milk that has become contaminated.

Experimental results differ as to the value of hay tea in calf rearing. At the station last mentioned, this material did not prove very satisfactory in tests undertaken. In other tests however, it has been shown that two gallons of hay tea, to which one-fourth pound each of flax seed and wheat middlings were added, the middlings, during the two months the test was under way being increased to one pound a day, gave gains in weight in the calves on an average of two pounds each per day.

SERIOUS

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