

In the Poultry Yard

Ode to a Hen

A great American poet has composed the following ode to a hen, which she richly deserves:

Cackle, cackle, Plymouth Rocks,
Ye can have the wagon box,
'N' the smokehouse, 'n' the barn,
Take 'em—we don't care a darn.
Cackle here and cackle there,
Lay your eggs just anywhere
Every time ye lay an egg,
Down the mortgage goes a peg.
Cackle cackle all the day,
Who kin find a better way
Fer to git ahead again
Than to cultivate the hen?
—Exchange.

Rearing of Turkeys

In order to successfully rear turkeys, a dry soil and shelter from cold east winds are essential. It is a mistake to attempt to rear them on tainted ground, or on the same land year after year; nor should they be reared together in large numbers unless very extensive grass runs are available.

Turkeys are more often hatched and brooded by natural than by artificial methods, and the former system is generally to be recommended. The young birds require more careful brooding for the first few weeks, and this can best be obtained from a natural mother.

The general treatment required for young turkeys is very similar to that for chickens, except that for the first few days closer attention must be paid to them. For twenty-four hours after hatching they require no food. During the following four days, hard-boiled eggs and bread crumbs may be given, for which, after the second day, oatmeal, barley meal, or biscuit meal, mixed with sweet milk may be partly substituted. Boiled rice is a useful addition to the diet and prevents diarrhoea. The young turkeys must be fed very frequently during this period.

At the end of a fortnight grain may be gradually introduced into the diet. Small wheat is very suitable, but should be given in limited quantities. Mixed mash, consisting of ground oats, barley meal, wheat meal, and pollard, should, however, be the chief food until the birds are three or four months old. Skimmed or separated milk is better than water for mixing the meals. No food, especially during the first few weeks, should be given in a very wet or sloppy condition, as this causes diarrhoea in young birds.

Turkeys require more flesh as food than do chickens. Boiled fresh meat or liver, finely chopped, is most suitable. From the first week turkeys should receive an abundance of green food, such as cabbage, boiled onions, or boiled young nettles, chopped up fine and mixed with the meals.

There is great danger in allowing the birds to run about amongst long wet grass or on heavy rain until they are five or six weeks old. It is best to keep them confined in a limited grass run for the first four weeks, the grass being kept short, and if the run becomes foul, to move the birds on to fresh grass. Large, roomy coops are suitable for housing, but these should have wooden floors; the coops also give shelter on wet days. In addition to the coops one or two extra shelters should be provided. When the young turkeys are given their liberty the mother, if a turkey hen, will take them away to the fields, and they then thrive remarkably well, chiefly because of the new ground and the abun-

dance of insect food obtained. All through the summer and until fattening commences, the turkeys should be fed in the fields and encouraged to stay there. An airy, well-ventilated house should be provided for them. They should be fed liberally with soft foods, consisting of a mixture of meals and boiled vegetables or roots in the morning and a feed of hard corn at night.

A constant supply of grit is even more necessary for turkeys than for fowls. It should be given during all periods of growth, commencing with fine chicken grit, and later supplied in some coarser form. The importance of this item cannot be over estimated.—English Rural World.

Sell the Old Hen

It is most profitable to dispose of old hens before the moulting period. There is then a ready market for fowls on account of the scarcity of chickens. If the hens are held until fall they will not realize as great a profit as they will, say, during July, owing to the reduction of the market price for fowls and the loss of flesh in moulting. Hens should be sold when they are two years old. All male birds should be sold in the summer and cockerels used for breeding the following season.

The Cost of Eggs

The following, from the Utah Experiment Station, will be of interest to egg producers:

"That there is money in eggs will not be denied in the face of the evidence given, for although the fowls undergoing the test did not lay an extraordinary number (358 being the highest average), the food cost per dozen amounted to only six and one-third cents, notwithstanding the food eaten by the poor layers was included in this average, which of course brings the cost much higher than it otherwise would be, and clearly suggests that the poor layers should be weeded out. The average number of eggs laid was 1,350. The pens which averaged 157 eggs produced them at a cost of but 4.7-1 cents per dozen. Another pen producing but 130 eggs, did so at a cost of 5.3-10 cents per dozen."

Curing Egg-Eating

Take an egg and puncture a small hole on the side, take a small piece of stick about the size of a match, stick it into the egg and churn the egg with it, constantly dipping the stick into a little red pepper and mustard, until the egg is thoroughly impregnated with the egg and mustard, then put it in the nest where the hen usually lays, with the open side up, and let the hen get at it as soon as she wants. She will never trouble the eggs again, and it will not injure the hen one bit. I have cared several in that way, and it will stop the habit, in the most inveterate egg-eater in Canada.—American Poultry Journal.

Toads in the Garden

Toads are valuable friends to gardeners. In Europe they are advertised for sale, and gardeners buy them in large numbers. Boys capture them in nets, which is easily done in evening twilight. When placed in a garden they seldom leave, but soon find a burrow under a board or stone, or at the root of tree or shrub, and make themselves at home. Their value is in the fact that they destroy many damaging insects.



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