

Soils and Crops

Address communications to Agronomist, 73 Adelaide St. West, Toronto

KEEPING YOUNG CHICKS GROWING

Early hatching is important, but not more important than to keep the chicks growing so that they will reach maturity and the pullets start laying before cold weather sets in. Factors that are essential for the proper growth and development of the young stock are proper housing, feed and water, free range, shade, cleanliness, freedom from mites and lice, good management.

One of the best methods of feeding your young stock is to keep a hopper of dry mash before the chicks, so that they can readily eat whenever they want to. Almost any of the commercial chick mash will do for this purpose, or the following mash will be satisfactory: Two parts by weight of cornmeal, two parts of middlings, one part of oatmeal (crushed oats), two parts of wheat bran and a half-part of sifted beef scrap. Supplement this with a dish or pan of sour milk and also one of clean bran, as the birds will eat readily of these foods. These, with the grain mixture and with proper care, should bring the chicks along in good condition. When they are eight or ten weeks old, add one part of ground oats and increase the meat scraps in the above mentioned mash.

HOPPERS SAVE LABOR OF FEEDING. Large feed hoppers holding at least two weeks' supply of mash or grain should be scattered over the range, so the birds can eat whenever they want to. If you want to use hoppers for both grain and mash feeding, one hopper will answer the purpose by dividing it in the centre. Whenever possible, place the hoppers in the shade. They should be raised off the ground four or five inches to allow the air to circulate under them, which will prevent the mash from becoming moldy and damp.

Do not overlook the importance of giving the growing stock all the cool fresh water they will drink. This should be supplied at least twice a day and placed in the shade. Wash the drinking dishes every day and scald them with boiling water once a week.

After the chicks are five or six days old, if the weather is suitable, they should be allowed on the ground, as they will grow much faster, when once they are strong enough to go out on the range, than when they are confined to their brooder houses. Portable fences, or some other arrangement, should be contrived whereby they can be confined to a small run in front of their house until they learn to go in and out of their own accord. After about a week the fences can be taken down, as the chicks by that time will go to their own quarters.

If the chicks are confined to limited range, it will be necessary to cultivate the ground at frequent intervals if you wish them to make a good rate of growth.

If it is possible to do so, place the colony houses near the south end, so this answers two purposes. First, it provides shade for the young stock and fresh cultivated ground for them to run over, which also furnishes a considerable supply of bugs and worms. An orchard is also a splendid place for chicks to run, and the chicks eat many worms and insects that are injurious to the trees. If neither corn-field nor orchard is available for this purpose, provide artificial shade by making light frames which may be covered with burlap. Be sure that they are high enough so that the birds will have no trouble in going under them.

Every effort must be made to keep the coops clean and sanitary, as disease most frequently starts in unclean quarters. Straw or some other litter should be scattered over the floor of the house to help in keeping it clean. If it is necessary to confine the birds for several days at a time due to rainy weather, the houses should be cleaned twice a week. Otherwise cleaning once a week is enough.

FRESH AIR ALL-IMPORTANT.

Beginning with warm weather, and continuing until fall, spray the colony houses at least once a week with a good disinfectant. The growing chicks should be provided with a house that will give them a place to stay in at night and during bad weather. It should provide them with ample ventilation without drafts, dryness and plenty of sunshine, and should be arranged so that it can easily be cleaned. The front of the house can be covered with one-inch mesh poultry wire netting, which will allow plenty of fresh air and keep out cats, skunks, foxes and other animals that are likely to catch the chicks at night. With such

a house be sure that there are no cracks in the sides and back to allow drafts.

OVERCROWDING CAUSES COLDS.

See that the birds do not crowd in their houses at night. Do not place too many in a house. This matter of overcrowding is often overlooked and may have most serious consequences on the future health of the flock followed to continue, especially during the fall. At this season of the year the birds are apt to crowd at night to keep warm, and when let out in the morning into the fresh cool air they become chilled and catch cold. Colds, as we all know, soon spread through the flock and if not checked turn into roup.

In working with the young stock do not scare them needlessly. Move among them carefully, so as to get them as tame as possible, and you will find that they do much better than chickens that are wild and that come to you only when forced to do so by hunger.

PROVIDE MORE ROOM AS BIRDS GROW. As the birds increase in size, they should be thinned out and placed in other houses. The colony brooder houses can be used for the growing stock after there is no longer need for artificial heat.

As soon as the cockerels begin to mate with the pullets, they should be separated and those that are not wanted as breeders during the coming year should be sent to market.

BUYING THE BROOD SOW.

Many farmers will be increasing their number of brood sows this spring, and to those who will come the problem of selecting breeding individuals that will show results, with profits at the end of the year. Like all other phases of farming, the hog feeder should give his best thought to this business of pork production.

You must have an ideal type of hog in mind, one that fulfills all requirements, and that has withstood the experience of former years. More depends upon this ideal type than upon the breed. The interest of the feeder in his home market, should above all things, guide him in his selections.

In the purchase of a brood sow or a bred gilt for future breeding, you should carry in your mind the firm belief that you are buying a producer, one that will farrow a good-sized litter. There is a chance to be taken in this respect but you can insure yourself somewhat if the sire and dam were from large, healthy litters. It is of importance that your purchase should carry such a record.

The next important characteristic in the buying of a brood sow is the problem of feeding her new-born family. Consequently a real milking machine is of vast importance and a real necessity. Great care and attention must absolutely be given the sow and her new family to start the baby porkers on the right road to profits. You cannot use slip-shod methods, nor neglect the duty that is yours for the success of the litter. So when you purchase the brood sow examine her closely, see that she possesses a good udder, with places for twelve or more little fellows to partake of nourishment. This is an important foundation for the future development of a strong, robust and healthy litter.

As you have your ideal type in mind, do not neglect to adhere to it, for there lies your future success. I recently received a sale catalogue of a very prominent breeder. It was very pleasing to note that he was advertising individuality. Little does the average hog-raiser bother with individuality, and I dare say a majority are entirely at a loss to connect any such characteristic with brood sows or the hogs that are in his feed lots.

The feeder should endeavor to keep his brood sows uniform, all as near the ideal type as possible, so that their offspring will show individuality and quality that will command the highest market price on sale day. It is one sure way to more profits.

Where and when shall I purchase my brood sow or bred gilt? Public auctions and private sales should not be overlooked and if the individuals merit your approval, buy the number you need, being very careful in your selections. See that each one has the necessary vigor, thrift and vitality for the perfect mothering of the coming litter. See that she is big and roomy, with plenty of stretch, standing up well on all four feet and with good sized bone. See that she is active and in good healthy every-day condition. Avoid the undersized and real fat sows. To these requirements add a little common sense and what Old Man Experience has taught you.

Farmer Must Know His Business.

Folks are coming to the idea that if we farmers are going to get in better financial shape financially, we must work out our own salvation. From a business standpoint we are manufacturers. We make raw materials for the public. As such, we should know what the consumer needs. Then in addition we should know how this material can be placed at the consumer's disposal at the least cost and

in the best condition. Many of the problems of the farmer can be worked out by the individual farmer himself. Others will require the united efforts of many farmers. The fact remains that we must work together.—L. S. Tenney.

If your kitchen range cracks on the inside, don't throw it away. Mend the broken place with equal parts of wood-ashes and salt, moistened with water. This will prove hard and lasting.

Do Lightning-Rods Protect?

By R. U. Burningham

Every once in a while somebody says that lightning-rods are no good—that they do not protect buildings from lightning. Only a few months ago a big barn that was rodless was struck by lightning and burned to the ground. The owner built a new barn and decided not to put rods on it. "No use," said he. "The rods didn't protect the first barn."

Possibly it didn't occur to this fellow that the rods which failed to save his first barn weren't put up right; or maybe they were poor rods.

As a matter of fact, when a building is properly rodless with good rods, it will not be struck by lightning.

In 1912, eighteen companies operating in Ontario kept records which show that for every 200 farm buildings insured, forty-two were rodless, which is about 21 per cent. Out of every 200 farm buildings which were struck by lightning only three were rodless. One would expect forty-two to be struck if the rods were no good. For every 7,000 farm buildings insured by these companies, thirty-seven were struck by lightning, several being burned. On the other hand, only two were struck by lightning and none burned. In other words, an unrodless building is eighteen and one-half times as likely to be struck as a rodless one.

In Ontario, in 1913, reports of forty-five companies show that 26.2 per cent. of their risks were rodless. During the year, 193 claims for lightning damage to buildings were paid, thirty-six of which were rodless, amounting to a loss of \$40,904.53. However, only eight rodless buildings were struck, with a total damage of \$57.64. This shows an efficiency of 99.5 per cent.

FARM BUILDINGS ARE BIGGEST RISKS.

About three out of four buildings that are struck by lightning are located in the country. City buildings are well protected from lightning, because they are crowded with water supply and heating systems, the radiator and pipes being connected to water-mains which make an excellent ground wire. Also, electric light and power lines and telephone wires, all of which are grounded, are in contact with city buildings; the grounding conducts the electricity away from the buildings as fast as it collects during a thunder-storm. While this does not afford perfect protection, yet there seems to be no question that wiring, water supply and heating systems are largely responsible for city buildings being safer from lightning strokes than country buildings, especially barns and outbuildings.

In order to understand how lightning-rods protect buildings you must know how lightning acts. It is often through lack of knowledge that the unscrupulous lightning-rod agent may get the best of you. If two positively charged bodies (charged with electricity) are brought together, they repel each other. But if a positively charged body and a negatively charged body are brought together, they attract each other. In other words, "like poles repel each other, unlike poles attract. Thus in the case of lightning, the cloud is the positively charged pole, the earth the negative.

As a thunder-storm develops, the air is able at first to resist a discharge from the cloud to the earth, but before long such a tension is developed that the strain becomes too great, the air can resist no longer and a discharge takes place. The area of danger zone is about equal to the size of the cloud, sometimes extending in front of the cloud. The greatest danger is with the passage of the storm front. Within this zone almost any upright object, such as a chimney, tree or cupola, being a better conductor than the air, may be struck.

All bodies do not act the same when charged with electricity. Some conduct the charge away at once; these are called conductors. Others retain the charge; these are non-conductors or insulators. Gutta-percha, glass, air, and wood, for instance, are non-conductors, while metals such as copper, iron, etc., are conductors. Trees, masonry, buildings, etc., will carry lightning, but offer so much resistance that they are splintered, destroyed, or heated to ignition when struck.

Telegraph and light wires are insulated from the poles by glass to prevent the current being taken up. It was thought for a long time that lightning-rods should also be insulated from the building, but this is incorrect. The rods should be attached directly to the buildings. This takes advantage of the fact that metal rods touching the building will take away the electrical charge which will otherwise collect on the building and may finally result in a stroke.

Lightning-rods serve a second purpose also. If the electrical charge should collect on a building faster than it is taken away, the rods will take care of the surplus.

IRON, COPPER AND ALUMINUM RODS. For many years iron and copper were the metals most widely used for lightning-rods. Recently aluminum has become a competitor.

Did you ever notice that the cable from the distributor to spark-plug on your automobile is made up of several thin wires twisted together? Electricity seems to travel on the outer surface of a conductor, and the several small wires offer more surface than the same amount of metal in one

solid wire. Lightning-rods are generally made of several small wires rather than one large wire. If iron is used, it could be in the form of a pipe, which offers a larger surface.

Copper has the ability to conduct a steady current of electricity six times as well as iron wire of the same size. Some tests show, however, that an iron rod will take off a "sudden rush" of electricity better than copper wire of the same size. Either metal can be very successfully used if it is made in correct size. Professor Day said that he examined a combination which has been in use for eight years and found the steel had been almost entirely destroyed by rust. Combination rods are made into one rod by placing the steel or iron wires inside a sheath of copper.

PUT THE GROUND RODS DEEP.

"Down to perpetual moisture" must be the specification for grounding lightning-rods in all cases. It may be as bad as no rod, or worse, to have lightning-rods if the soil is dry around the ground wire. You may think that a ground connection will always be wet during a thunder-storm because of the rain, but it often happens that the lightning flash will precede the rain storm.

TYPES OF GROUNDS.

1. The star-shaped ground consists of a series of wires soldered together in the shape of a star. To this star-shape the rod which extends up to the building is soldered. This form of ground is sometimes used for wireless stations.

2. Coiled wire or rod made in the shape of a spiral, with a diameter of about six inches.

3. Ground rod fastened, in an approved manner, to a plate.

4. A piece of pipe may be sharpened and driven down to perpetual moisture. The flash may travel through end of the pipe, or the lightning-rod can be run to the bottom end of the pipe and the pipe filled with coke around the wire.

5. Lightning-rods may be attached to water pipe outside the building. The connection may be made by fusing the ground wire to a plug and screwing the plug into the water-main. Wells, cisterns and streams also make excellent grounds for lightning-rods. If the ground wires come anywhere near gas-mains, it is wise to make doubly sure of a good moist ground connection and get as far away as practicable from the gas-main. The flash may travel through a few feet of earth to such a main and melt it, or set fire to any leaky joints along its course.

6. If there is limestone rock under the ground, it may be hard to get down to perpetual moisture. Then it might be well to bury a long wire in a trench, dug as deep as possible, and pack fine coke around the wire. The coke should be moistened. In addition, soil which contains plenty of humus (not fresh manure), if thrown in the trench, will help to hold moisture.

The powdered coke serves two purposes; it holds moisture and it is a conductor. The trench should be perpendicular to the foundation and should not run parallel with it.

PROTECT THE GROUND WIRE. Where ground wires are located at corners of barns, they are likely to be torn away by wagons or other farm machinery. To protect the wires, build a box about six feet high, of 1x3-inch lumber, around each ground wire. Inspect the ground wire from time to time to see that it is intact.

WIRE FENCE PROTECTION.

The following recommendations are made with respect to protection of wire fences from lightning:

1. Ground the fence line at intervals of twenty or twenty-five rods.

2. Ground the fences at all intersecting fence lines or corners, and wherever abrupt turns are made.

3. Avoid making direct connection of fences and ground and ground all fences adjacent to buildings, especially fences surrounding barnyards.

4. Break the continuity of a long fence by using a pair of vertical wood bars as insulators of not over 100 rods, whereby electrical connections are broken.

5. Use three No. 12 or No. 9 wires, securely stapled to post, and in contact with all wires, for grounding. The grounded wire should project above the post and at least three feet into the ground. Metal posts used at intervals of twenty rods may be substituted for ground wires.

Use lightning conductors which conform to underwriters' requirement and have a reliable lightning-rod concern put up the rods.

Good Counsel for Hog Breeders.

A. A. MacMillan, Chief of the Sheep and Swine Division at Ottawa, gives excellent advice to swine breeders when he says: The profitable hog is the one that keeps growing from birth to finished market weight. Grow the pig out by feeding skim milk, shorts, alfalfa and roots, or blood or fish meal. Finish the pig when grown on barley, oats, and corn. Mature bacon hogs are finished weighing 200 to 210 pounds at six to seven months of age. A few extra dollars invested in the boar will often save a good many bushels of grain when finishing your hogs for market, and will get the farmer better prices.

A Sun Subscription Offer

The next three months will be months of absorbing interest to the electors of Ontario. Never before in the history of the Province was there as much political confusion and uncertainty as there is to-day; never before was it so necessary that electors should understand the point of view of those with whom they differ.

The Farmers' Sun during the coming campaign will endeavor to give its readers a full and impartial record of events and to those who hold to the principles it supports, as well as those who may support other principles but who wish to be well informed, it offers a special subscription opportunity. The Sun will be sent to any address in Ontario for three months for fifty cents, or six months for one dollar. You may send your subscription by Postal Note or Express Order to the Sun Office, or through the courtesy of your local paper.

The Farmers' Sun
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SHEEP

A choice lamb brings the top price. It possesses the form, quality, conformation and weight demanded by the dealer in high-class meats. Such a lamb shows the most development in the loin, back and leg. These are the parts from which the high-price cuts are obtained. Other indications of good form are depth and breadth of body, denoting blockiness, and absence of paunchiness and roughness which might indicate waste. Short legs and neck are usually associated with the ideal form.

"Quality" is one of the most important factors, according to the department of agriculture, in determining the value of fat lambs as it indicates the grade of quality of the meat. Other factors being equal, it also indicates probable yield and freedom from waste. General quality is indicated by a medium-sized, clean-cut head, ears of fine texture, fine bone and full, well-rounded outlines indicating a thick, even development of firm flesh.

Quality in the flesh of a lamb is very largely dependent upon the condition. Condition indicates the degree of finish or fatness. A finished lamb yields a larger percentage of meat and a more attractive carcass than does a thin lamb. The meat has a better flavor and is more palatable. Good condition of flesh in the live lamb is indicated by thickness and firmness along the back, at the loins, over the sides, and on the legs. In addition to being firm there should be enough springiness to the flesh for it to yield slightly to the touch. Condition is determined by feeling the thickness of the back, loin, dock, and leg, as it cannot be determined by sight alone.

The ideal weight in lambs is from sixty-five to eighty pounds, although the preferred weight varies slightly with the season. Lambs weighing less than the ideal range probably are in greater demand during the summer months because of the heavier chops which they yield.

Common or cull lambs are decidedly lacking in the conformation, condition and quality which killers demand when they are buying to meet the wants of discerning buyers, consumers. Coarse, angular lambs commonly belong to this grade, but not unless they are noticeably lacking in quality of flesh and amount of fat. Lambs grading common or cull include those weighing from thirty to fifty pounds and all the animals known as coarse, "bucky" lambs which may weigh as much as 100 pounds, and which are the result of careless methods on the part of growers. Male lambs which are not castrated early will become coarse when the sex instinct develops and will lose flesh and fat as the result of fruitless activity; hence they sell at a discount on the market.

Top market lambs can not be produced without using good breeding stock, and giving the flock the proper care and attention before and after lambing. All lambs should be docked and male lambs castrated when seven to ten days of age if it is desired to obtain the premiums which the trade is ready to offer for the best lambs.

Canadian Live Stock Market.

Top prices for steers, calves, hogs and lambs were reported by the Dominion Live Stock Branch for the week ending March 28, to have been as follows: Steers, Toronto, \$7.75; Montreal, \$7.50; Winnipeg, \$6.90; Calgary, \$6.25; and Edmonton, \$6.50. Hogs, Toronto, \$14; Montreal, \$9; Winnipeg, \$10; Calgary, \$8; Edmonton, \$9.75; Toronto, \$11.85; Montreal, \$11.25; Winnipeg, \$10.45; Calgary, \$9.75; Edmonton, \$10.45. Lambs, Toronto, \$15.50; Montreal, \$11.60; Winnipeg, \$12.50; Calgary, \$11.50; and Edmonton, \$10.60. It must be remembered that these are top prices, averages, being let down by animals not the very best, running considerably lower, but at that they generally reached quotations of the same date last year, and in some cases were rather better. Up to date this year sales of cattle and calves at the five principal markets in Canada have been more by 40,000 heads than during the corresponding period of last year. Hogs and sheep also show increases; hogs, by one hundred thousand and sheep of five thousand.

The most that you will get out of a poorly-arranged barn is plenty of exercise.

TOP-GRAFTING OF APPLE TREES

It is not difficult to master the art of grafting. Anyone exercising care can do it successfully. We cannot hope to increase the vigor of a tree by grafting, hence the operation will not help a weak one very much. It pays best to top-work vigorous growing trees. The most satisfactory method is called cleft-grafting.

The limb to be grafted is sawed off squarely, leaving a smooth solid stump. This is split down about two inches with a grafting chisel or knife. The chisel is withdrawn and the cleft is wedged open. The scion should be cut to contain three buds, and should be of strong well-matured wood of the previous season's growth. The lower end of the scion is then cut to a wedge, leaving the first but a little below the top of the wedge, and cutting the edge of the wedge opposite the bud a little thinner than the other. The scion is put into place with the lower bud to the outside and a little below the top of the cleft, care being taken to bring the inner bark on the outer edge of the wedge in contact with the inner bark on the stub, as it is between these parts that the union takes place. Sometimes the inexperienced gaffer places the scion flush with the outer edge of the stub. On large stubs with thick bark such a practice is likely to result in failure. Some advocate setting the scion on a slight slant, the point toward the centre of the stub, thus ensuring a contact of the cambium layers where they cross. This is a good plan, since a contact is sufficient for a good union. With a scion properly set on each edge of the cleft, the wedge is withdrawn, allowing the cleft to tighten on the scion and holding it firmly in place. Wax should then be applied to all cut surface, even to the tip of the scion. Care should be taken to cover the end of the stub between the scions, and the cleft as far as it extends down on the side of the stub. This prevents drying out, and must be thoroughly done.

Use care in the selection of the stubs into which scions are to be set. It is not advisable to remove the whole top of the tree the first year. Cut away only the top necessary, which in young trees usually will be about half the tree or less of six stubs. If more are grafted the top is likely to be too dense and will have to be removed later. The scion tends to grow upright, so that even, well-spaced distribution should be aimed at. That is, the stubs should not be one above another. It is not wise, however, when grafting small trees to go too far from the centre of the tree, as it will be better to correct the upright tendency by later pruning. In older trees branches over three inches in diameter should be avoided; usually those two inches in size will be found to be best.

The time for grafting is just when the buds are beginning to swell. Earlier grafting is liable to result in a drying out of the scion before a union is established. If the scions are kept dormant and in good condition the work may be done later.

In the selection of scion wood for grafting, strong well-matured growth with well-developed buds should be taken. Scions for grafting, if not already taken, should preferably be cut in March, and placed in a cool cellar in sand. They should be cut when there is no frost in the wood. Scion wood may be taken up until the buds start to swell, but the ones cut early and kept absolutely dormant in a cellar do better.

After-care of grafted trees is important. The scion branch should be cut back the first year to about eighteen inches, and if both scions have succeeded one should be cut out. All water sprouts or suckers are cut out, and half the remaining branches taken off, completing the removal of these the third year. Subsequent pruning will consist of such cutting back as will help form a stocky well-shaped tree.

One of the cheapest and best grafting waxes, known as "Reliable," is made of four parts by weight of resin, two of beeswax, and one of tallow. The ingredients are melted together and poured into a pail of cold water. The hands are then greased and the wax pulled until it is nearly white. This is one of the best waxes for either indoor or outdoor use. It should be heated before using, if too hard. A more pliable wax for outdoor use is made of five parts by weight of resin, one of beeswax, and one-quarter of boiled linseed oil.

Built-in Curb in Garage.

A built-in curb along the front wall of a garage is a good thing for two reasons: It checks the car when driving in, and it makes filling the radiator an easier job. The curb is eight inches high and two feet from the wall. Edges are rounded, so as not to injure tires.

Hint for Spring.

Don't fail to see that the right kind of seedbed is prepared for spring-planted crops. It doesn't pay to spend the summer cultivating and harvesting a crop that hasn't a ghost of a show because it didn't have the right kind of chance given at the beginning. A good seedbed is deep, mellow, has no large clods or open spaces below the surface, and has plenty of plant-food humus.

Do it now! What is not gathered in youth cannot be enjoyed in old age.

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