THE SIMPLE LIFE

WITH THE POULTRYMAN

SELECTING THE LAYING HEN

EGGS are the foundation of the poultry business. No other branch is any surer or more profitable in the long run. There is money in broilers, roasters, etc., but without eggs they could not be obtained. The more eggs a hen lays the more profit there is for the poultry raiser above the cost of feed, labor, etc. The more eggs a pullet lays in its maiden effort, the more eggs it will lay in its second year.

It is a well known fact that the older the hen the less eggs it lays. Thus if a poor layer as a pullet, a poorer layer as a hen—a pullet laying 125 eggs in its first year.

As a hen in second year of laying would fall below the 100 mark, some much lower; but the pullet that laid 180 to 200 eggs in its first year could be depended upon to lay 125 to 150 eggs its second, thus proving itself to be a real money maker.

Now, we are prepared to admit that pullets laying 180 to 200 eggs in the year are not found by the hundreds in the poultry yards of the fancier, but on the farms and plants of the utility raiser whose sole aim is eggs and meat, heavy layers are on the increase. There are quite a few egg farms that have made phenomenal records in the past few years, getting from 150 to 180 eggs per hen in flocks.

These poultry raisers have been breeding for years along the lines of heavy egg production by the use of trap nests. The only sure method of selecting the hen that laid the egg.

Now it takes time to attend to trap nests, for no half-way system will pay. They must be in use from the first egg at maturity to the end of the 365 days that make the year. It is the persistent layer that makes the record. We have known pullets to start with a rush—that had the average been made by the first two months, one would think the 300 mark had been reached, but in the long run others with not such a good two-months average would beat them out.

The extra time consumed in attending trap nests to select future breeders will repay twofold. No matter how few hens the poultry raiser keeps, it pays you to trap nest a few. A few good layers are worth more than many poor ones. In a few years, by careful breeding, the poultry raiser will be enabled to obtain twice the number of eggs per flock than formerly where no system was used to tell which "hen laid the egg."

It is a fact that there are now quite a few egg farms with but 500 to 800 layers that are turning out more hen fruit than some of the larger plants so often read about. We have in our mind now a little plant at Hammonton, N. J., of 500 layers each winter, Wyandottes, that made the average of 170 per hen, and there are others seldom heard of in the poultry press that are quietly working out the problem of more eggs by the use of trap nests. It is the layer that pays—there is no disputing that fact. Here on the farm we not only breed for layers, but for early maturity, never breeding from any pullet that does not lay its first egg within six months from incubation, with the results this year of having many pullets start laying at four and one-half months, the majority starting at five and five and one-half months. These birds are not forced, nor are the layers forced. It wholly lies within the breeding. No matter how the fowls are fed, no flock not bred for egg production will make the same average in the year, as the flock bred for egg production. Feed and proper housing play an important part in a heavy egg yield. But breeding must be back of it. To the beginner, then, who is looking for results, it is wise to use trap nests.

The only sure method that will lead to a large increased egg yield, the extra time consumed will amply repay any who raise poultry for eggs.

FEEDING SUGAR TO POULTRY AND FARM ANIMALS

This is a practice as old as the hills and the name of the man who is responsible for it has been forgotten for centuries.

The instincts of animals, however, remain for ages, and the same motive that prompts animals to travel for miles to obtain salt from some available lick is alive in them today. Many of the plants on which wild animals graze have a small quantity of sugar in them, and in this manner they obtain the small amount necessary to satisfy their needs. Our domestic animals, not being allowed to seek the sugar-bearing plants, are obliged to go without it, except when some one playfully offers them a bit. You have doubtless noticed how greedily horses eat it; they will follow one about, hoping to get enough to satisfy their craving.

This action in time attracted the attention of some scientific fellow, who fed sugar to his poultry and farm animals, and noted results. He got the results, but could not stand the expense; he substituted molasses, found it answered as well as sugar, and was cheaper. From that time on the feeding of sugar was taken up, and many have written much on the subject.

Some years ago the idea was conceived of compounding a balanced ration of grains and molasses, but experiments finally convinced that the same could neither be sent out ready mixed with the raw molasses nor use artificial heat to dry it. Continued research, however, finally developed a process of turning the molasses into sugar in a granular dry meal form, that was a new one, and the process was patented. This done, the rest was easy, and today there are thousands and thousands of tons of dairy, horse and poultry feeds being used with great profit to the feeders.

The value of sugar in a dairy feed has been advertised and brought before the notice of the public more extensively in the past few years than that of poultry feed. This does not, however, in any way reflect on the value of this ingredient for chickens, as experiments have already shown that sugar in the proper form when mixed with a perfect balance of other grains of known value, is a great saving for the poultryman as well as increasing the profits. It is a wonderful egg producer and builder of bone, flesh and feathers. Another important feature of sugar feeding is the flavor of meat which it imparts to the flesh of the bird, making a rich, juicy meat which commands a premium price on any fair market.

Extensive experiments have been made with a feed of this nature for ducks and turkeys. On the duck farm the birds are ready for market in from ten to eleven weeks after leaving the shell, and as the cost of the feed is no greater than other rations used, a great saving is readily recognized.

The molasses or sugar has 80 per cent of the nutritive value of corn, but is far more valuable as a feed stuff owing to its effect on the system of the bird fed. It aids in the digestion and assimilation of all the feed eaten during the day and keeps the fowl in a healthy condition, avoiding the necessity of using condition powders and medicated condiments of the one hundred and one varieties in vogue.

Within the next twelve months it is conservative to say that the poultryman who is in the business for profit will find, after making a test for himself, that the proper amount of sugar in the feed for his poultry will be the source of greatly increased profits and healthier fowls.—American Poultry Journal.

FIVE EGG RULES

Here are a few simple rules which will be of great benefit to those that expect a large egg yield during the coming winter, and if they are carefully followed they will assist very materially in the fulfillment of your "egg desires."

First—Remember that your hens are like other stock—the better they are cared for and fed, the more they will earn for you. Diet them properly and results will be satisfactory.

Second—Keep your hens at work. This is absolutely essential for success. When your hens run after you it is a sure sign that they are fed too much and are too lazy to work at scratching. Try to encourage them to scratch, and hang their green food so high that they will have to work to get it.

Third—In the morning feed a light food, and if the weather is cold, feed a warm mash and do not feed too much in the morning, but in the evening, or just before roosting time, feed a good solid food, enough to satisfy all wants, and if the weather be cold, feed a goodly amount of corn, not "nubbins," but good, clean corn.

Fourth—After the morning meal, scatter some millet seed, wheat or oats in the litter, so they will have to scratch during the day, and if they refuse to scratch, let them fast for two or three days. An ounce of cut bone should be given each hen every other day at the morning feed and a little cut clover in the mash will do a lot of good.

Fifth—Do not think because the weather is cool you will not have to keep them clean, but remember that cleanliness is essential to your poultry as it is to yourself, and remember that you do not, or at least should not, neglect your baths because it is winter.—Poultry Yard.

FANCY POULTRY VS. FARM POULTRY

As the season is advancing day by day and young chicks are growing stronger and larger, the true fancier is watching the young stock and under the care of a good poultryman they will thrive and by show season will return to him in compensation many a dollar for the time and care he has taken during their infancy. Breeding fancy stock does not cost a great deal more than raising for market. The farmer has the advantage of space and feed, but when it comes to disposing of surplus stock he will have to sell one-half to one dozen of his birds at the price the fancier gets for one of his pure-bred birds. This amount varies from five to ten dollars. Spring chicks at six to seven months old will bring usually twelve and a half to fifteen cents a pound. The fancier gets about $1 to $2 per pound, and quite often more than $2 per pound. In the late summer and fall and winter season, the fancier gets the same price for his surplus eggs, sometimes one or two cents more, than the farmers. The feed consumed by the fancy poultry breeder averages more in cash value, especially when parties are living in the city or have not the range to let his poultry run at large after the breeding season is over or at all times. I have noticed in visiting some of the breeders keeping from two to four varieties by having a lot 75 by 150 feet, making the runs 15 feet by 50 feet long, leaving the balance of space as a run, turning one pen in the morning, the next in the afternoon, thus making it very handy and giving the birds free range and plenty of exercise.

In regard to farmers breeding fowls for market, I advise them to discontinue breeding black fowls or feather-legged ones, on account of shippers paying you from one and one-half to two cents less on the market per pound. I am informed by our large produce houses that the demand for yellow skin and medium sized birds will give a better price than for all kinds of a mixed lot of birds.

Rhode Island Reds, Wyandottes and Rocks are the best market fowls, being of medium weight, yellow skin, which is so much desired by poultry produce houses. Breeders of fancy fowls in the Asiatic classes will have to cater almost exclusively to the fancy trade on account of the above discrimination of black fowls and feather-legged ones by our Western poultry houses. As the season advances, many a prize winner will be making his bow to the poultry fraternity this coming winter, and will put his owner up a notch towards getting his egg business increased the coming season. Advertising your stock, if it is worth advertising, is the starting point towards your success. Let the people know that you have got stock to sell. Give them value for money received, and you will not have to put any of your surplus cockerels on the market. Our largest advertisers in the country have commenced at the bottom, and by using good judgment their cash receipts run into hundreds of dollars received for stock and eggs. Go thou and do likewise.—Poultry Success.

NOTES

With the early setting hens at least food should be placed within their easy reach so that they need not be long in quest of it.

A dust bath almost every day is necessary to the health and happiness of a hen, and she should have it.

AROUND THE FARM

OATS AND BRAN FOR MILCH COWS

THE high protein content of oats combined with other good qualities, gives it a high rating as a grain feed for milk cows. In many parts of the country, where it returns large yields per acre, it is a cheap source of protein. When oats are high, however, and bran can be purchased at a reasonable price, it often is better to sell the oats and feed the mill product.

There is a close similarity between oats and bran in their analysis and their value for feeding. One experiment is on record where whole oats were ground and gave 10 per cent. better milk and butter-fat returns than bran. Of course, bran is quite variable in its analysis, so that this result could only be considered as indicative. However, the above experiment does not disagree much with general opinion.

Bran, that is, wheat bran, derives its high value from the fact that it contains a larger amount of digestible protein and ash than any of the common grains. Besides it adds bulk to a heavy grain ration; for example, corn meal, and is a natural laxative—two points considered by many to represent the best properties of bran.

Comparing the analysis of oats with that of bran, we find that for every hundred pounds of weight, bran furnishes three pounds more of digestible protein and nearly the same amount more of ash. While it is somewhat short on fat content, we will not consider that feature, both of these feeds are used primarily for their ash and protein, principally the latter, and other qualities mentioned before. Let us compare the two feeds on a protein basis alone, placing the cost of this element at three and three-quarters cents per pound. This is what protein costs in feeds where it comprises a large part, as for example, in cotton-seed meal. Just on a protein basis, therefore, bran is worth nearly twelve cents more per hundred pounds than oats. Thus if the cost of bran is ninety cents per hundred, oats would be worth twelve cents less, or practically twenty-eight cents per bushel. With bran at eighty cents, oats would equal it at twenty-five cents.

It must be remembered that this comparison has been based solely on protein basis. While we think that is the point on which to make the most representative comparison, there are other things to be considered; for example, the cost of marketing the oats and hauling back the bran. This expense would allow oats to be two or three cents per bushel above their value compared with bran, before the change would be profitable. Then in turn this expense might be offset by the superior property of the bran in giving bulk to the ration of grain and keeping the digestive apparatus in tone. Ash is low in many rations and as this is a very necessary element in the making of milk, the large percentage in bran is a point in favor of the mill product.

From the above we do not wish to give the impression that when the price admits, bran should wholly replace oats, for we should always wish to feed several pounds of this unexcelled grain for milk making. But suppose oats are worth twenty-eight cents per bushel and bran eighty cents per hundred, it is quite likely that the farmer any reasonable distance from the market could buy and feed bran freely, especially if no clover hay or other roughage high in protein could be fed. The following ration will illustrate our point. It is intended that corn stover and clover hay be fed freely for roughage in conjunction with this grain ration: Three pounds corn-and-cob meal, two pounds oats and six pounds bran; this amount to be fed daily to a cow weighing 1,000 pounds. Though a trifle below the standard set for protein, this ration will be economical and conducive to the thrift of the herd. If clover hay is not obtainable then one or two pounds linseed meal must be added. Some careful breeders would not be without bran, whatever it cost, but the farmer not making a specialty of dairying must be economical and use feeds of his own raising as largely as possible.

KEEP YOUR COWS CLEAN

It is strange that so many men, who are supposed to be good dairymen, fail to realize what damage dirt does to milk, remarks a writer. "Why I can take it out with the strainer," is a reply that is far too common, and which shows ignorance of true conditions.

The change in milk, such as souring and production of bad flavors and odors, are due to bacteria. These are conveyed to the milk in dirt of one kind or another—dust in the air, dirt dropping from the cow's sides and udder, dirt from the milker's hands or unclean milking utensils. These bacteria, once in the milk, cannot be separated by straining; you might as well mix salt with dirt, put it in milk, and expect to remove it by straining. The bacteria pass through the strainer with the milk, and rapidly multiply. Bacteria carried in on manure and dirt from the cow's sides and udder are very undesirable, for most of them are putrefactive, and do much damage to the milk by developing bad flavors, which pass to the butter through the cream. Remember that the dirt does not do the damage—dirt can be removed by a strainer. It is the germs carried in by the dirt that give trouble, and no amount of straining will remedy this. Keep your cows clean and keep down dust when milking is in progress. Above all, never allow one who has been about a sick person—in such diseases as are commonly called contagious—have anything to do with the cows or milk. Disease is transmitted far too easily in this way.—Vet. Halifax, N. S.

TO KEEP HORSES HEALTHY

Here is a very sensible suggestion which comes from one long experienced in handling horses, taken from the American Team Owner. He says:

The care of the skin and coat is not a matter of smoothness or ugliness of the coat; it is merely a question of cleanliness of the skin, which is essential to the health of the horse. Some people reason that as a horse turned out to pasture does not need grooming, it is not natural and the horse should not be groomed. The necessity for grooming comes with the amount of work done and the kind of food given the horse. The secretions of the glands of the skin are enormously increased by work, and also the work horse must be fed nutritious food, which also largely increases the secretions of the skin.

Nature must be assisted by artificial means to remove these increased secretions, or the pores of the skin will become clogged and the health impaired. The greater the activity of the skin the greater the attention necessary. The horse in state of nature takes only the exercise required to obtain his food, and he feeds principally on laxative diet, and as the debris of the food and excretions of the system are carried through the kidneys, grooming is not necessary.

The appearance of the coat readily shows the healthy or unhealthy condition of the skin. Without grooming, the diet remains in the hair, but through the excretory glands enters the system. This important set of glands acts as drains, and when these are checked with impurities, the general health necessarily suffers.

When the horse sheds its coat in spring and autumn the nourishment of the old hair is arrested, and the soft, pulpy extremities shrink and dry up, the hair becomes detached and falls out; at the same time a new hair is formed and pushed up to its side.

Grooming answers two principal and several subsidiary ends. First, it removes from the skin those particles of perspiration, dust and dirt which would otherwise impede and clog the free action of the sweat and oil glands. Secondly, it removes the scurf or wornout cells, which are no longer required on the surface of the skin, and which would, especially when cemented together by particles of sweat, add to the obstruction of the glands.

In order that grooming should produce the two above mentioned principal effects, it is necessary that the skin be cleaned with a good bristle brush strongly applied and well laid on.

THE USE OF THE DISC HARROW

There is no work to which the disc harrow is specially adapted. It is a general purpose tool for cultivating the soil, useful in the spring when the land is being prepared for seed, indispensable in handling the summer fallow later in the season, after harvest sometimes taking the place of the plow.

In the preparation of the seed bed the disc has two functions to perform. First, the soil is required to be put into the best possible mechanical condition for receiving the seed, and, second, this condition should be brought about in such a way and at such a time that the greater portion of the moisture which fell on the land during the winter will be retained and held for the use of the crop. To accomplish this last purpose best the discs should be put on to the land as early in the spring as possible, should be used first as soon as the soil is dry enough not to stick to the blades. A mulch is thus formed over the water supply in the soil before much of it can evaporate, and the maximum amount of the moisture of the winter's snow is conserved, a factor of considerable importance to the grain farmer of the central and southwest portions of the prairie provinces.

In the proper use of the disc harrow the land is gone over twice, the disc being lapped half. Lapping is better than cross disking, which some farmers practice, and is the most effective means of getting the soil into that thoroughly pulverized and loose surface condition so essential in moisture retention. Cross disking defeats the very purpose it is intended to fulfil. Crossing leaves the surface in an uneven condition, and increases the soil surface exposed. The result is that evaporation is increased and the soil moisture as rapidly dissipated as it would be had no cultivation been undertaken at all. Lapping each half over and giving the soil two full strokes has an entirely different effect. In the first place it levels down the ridge which all discs form whether they throw the soil inward or outward; second, it pulverizes the soil more thoroughly than could be done by cross disking, and in addition leaves the surface smooth and level and less liable to be drained of its moisture. A soil mulch made by disc harrow when properly employed is the most effective moisture retainer possible to obtain.

MAKE USE OF THE EXPERIENCE OF OTHERS

The men who have had experience in fruit growing in this Western country are unfortunately few. In every district each year farmers set out trees, bushes, vines, shrubs or flowers with little or nothing to guide them in the matter of choosing species or varieties. The agent, of course, from whom the stock is purchased, is generally free enough with advice on what to choose and how to plant and manage, but his advice is more frequently given to lure the customer into signing a good large order, than it is from any desire to see the purchaser make a success of the business. The advice of agents, as a rule, is not worth taking seriously. The horticultural knowledge possessed by the average of them is derived from a brief perusal of the circular of "instructions to agents" sent out by nursery companies, and these instructions are intended generally, more as an aid to the salesman in preparing a "coin fetching spiel" to shoot into prospective customers, than as information from which he may derive a knowledge of the problems and practices of fruit or plant growing sufficient to make his advice to farmers, on what to grow and how to plant, of any value whatever.

Before a man goes into the fruit growing business in this country, he needs to inform himself as thoroughly as he can on every phase of the industry. He should know for a certainty what varieties are adapted to his district, how each should be planted and cared for. He should make use of the experiences of others and reduce his chances of failure, planting only varieties that with reasonable care are certain of bringing forth fruit.

In a number of the older districts there are men who have made some success in horticulture and the branches that pertain thereto, flowers, gardening and tree growing, but whether the counsel of such men is available or not, every farmer should have at hand reliable information on horticultural questions. Information of this kind is available in the form of government bulletins, experimental farm literature and horticultural society reports, but to the average farmer a good book or two written expressly for the guidance of planters in our own provinces will be of more use than these, and the information given, while it may not be of greater value than that contained in bulkier volumes and reports, will at least be in a more readily available form. No farmer should go far in fruit growing in this country without the experience of others to guide him. If he does, failure ninety-nine times in a hundred is bound to occur. Neither is that experience any less valuable because it is printed in a book.