

PESTS, PARASITES, AND DISEASES.

PESTS.

RATS.—The rat is the worst mammalian pest known to the poultryman. Its depredations everywhere result in losses amounting to thousands of dollars annually, and though thousands are killed, other thousands soon replace the slain. The most important step toward the suppression of the rat is to adopt some method to prevent it from increasing in numbers so rapidly. Restricted supplies of food means fewer rats. Their bill of fare includes seeds and grass of all kinds, flour, meal, eggs, chicks, young turkeys, ducklings, andlings, and other foods. It has been found that it costs at least 25 cents every year to feed one rat, and this on the cheaper foods alone. The failure of efforts to exterminate this rodent has not been due to lack of effective methods so much as to negligence and the absence of concerted action.

The more important means of fighting rats are: (1) Natural enemies of the rat; (2) Rat-proof construction of buildings; (3) Keeping food from rats; (4) Driving away rats; (5) Destroying rats. Trapping, if persistently followed, is one of the most effective ways of destroying rats. Another method is by the use of strychnine sulphate. The dry crystals may be inserted in small pieces of raw meat or toasted cheese, and these placed in rat runs and burrows.

The following method is recommended for poisoning rats where the rats are among chickens. Take two wooden boxes, one larger than the other, and each having two or more holes in the sides large enough to admit rats. The poisoned bait should be placed on the bottom and near the middle of the smaller box, and the larger box should then be inverted over the other. Rats have thus free access to the bait, but fowls are excluded.

HAWKS, CROWS, ETC.—In some parts of the Province it is almost impossible to raise poultry without very heavy losses, because of the depredation of these birds. An ordinary milk-trap (rusty ones are best) placed on top of a pole at least 15 feet high, and securely chained, will help to rid the flocks of these enemies. The trap need not be baited. Festoons of tape or white strings strung across rearing yards near the coops and second-hand fish-nets have proven very satisfactory in warding off birds of prey. Poisoned infertile or worthless eggs, placed out in a field frequented by crows, skuks, milk, etc., are also successful remedies. Crystallized form of strychnine is one of the best poisons to use. The eggs should be placed in the soft, large end up, and the top removed, and a few crystals of the poison inserted and mixed with the contents of egg. These should be placed out over-night, and removed before chicks are released in the morning.

PARASITES.

LICE.—Lice probably exist in small numbers wherever there are fowls, but as long as fowls are healthy and active lice cannot increase rapidly enough to seriously annoy the birds. They can only become troublesome from gross neglect, either of the fowls or of their habitations. In the one case the remedy is some good common insecticide placed in the dust-bath, which may be mixed powdered tobacco or a little sulphur; in the other an energetic lime-washing of the houses and interior arrangements, with a free use of a solution of carbolic acid.