

Our Poultry Corner

If you have some things you do not understand in connection with your poultry and want some information, state your case briefly and to the point, writing on one side of paper only, and address it to THE MONITOR PUBLISHING COMPANY LIMITED, we will submit it to Prof. Landry, and when his answers are received we will publish them withholding your name if you so desire it.

RAISE YOUR DUCKS PROFITABLY

The raising of "green ducks" is not carried on in Canada to nearly as great extent as it might be. The business is but in its infancy, being practically unknown in most parts of the country. In the United States duck farms are comparatively common, some establishments raising ducks by the tens of thousands each season.

"Green Ducks" is the term used to designate young ducks that have just completed their first coat of feathers. They reach this period at from eight to twelve weeks of age, depending on the breed, and the methods of handling. For profitable production ducks should be marketed at this period as if kept past it they will not be in condition to market for a considerable time and generally consume far more than they will pay for.

In different countries different breeds are in favor. In France the Rouen is the favorite market duck. It is one of the most beautiful of all the varieties. It is very large, has a heavy keel and is of the Mallard type of coloring. It does not mature as quickly as some of the other varieties but the quality of its flesh is unsurpassed. Those who breed Rouens in this country breed them largely on account of their beauty and exhibition qualities.

In England the Aylesbury is the favorite. They are large, snow white ducks with heavy keels and a horizontal carriage. They are not bred extensively in this country, but many strains of Pekins show an effusion of Aylesbury blood.

The Pekin is indisputably the market duck of America. It is as large as either of the aforementioned varieties, is a quick grower, being ready to market at eight to ten weeks of age, and is more prolific. It is more upright in carriage and the keel is not so pronounced as in the Aylesbury or Rouen, although exhibition breeders are striving to develop a heavier keel.

The Cayuga is a medium weight duck, and although the quality of the flesh is of the best it is not bred for market purposes to any extent. Its beautiful beetle green plumage makes it a favorite with fanciers.

The Indian Runner is known as the Leghorn of the duck family. It is a light weight duck but very prolific. It matures quickly, being ready to market rather sooner than the Pekin and as a rule keeps in plumper condition than the heavier varieties. It has become a favorite for the supplying of restaurant trade.

Ducks as Layers

The laying season for ducks is usually not so long as for hens, but while it lasts production is very heavy. Ducks often lay every day for quite a long period. It is customary to mate from four to eight or ten ducks to a drake, depending on the time of the year and the variety. Where they are run in large flocks, early in the season, with Pekins, one male is allowed to four females, but later on they may be increased to six females. With Runners one drake is allowed to six ducks, and later in the season one to eight or ten. Where they are kept under favorable conditions the fertility is usually high.

As they usually lay early in the morning, it is advisable to keep them closed up at night so that the eggs may be laid where they can be found. Otherwise many will be lost, as they are very careless and are liable to drop them anywhere. It is advisable to set the eggs as soon after they are laid as possible, but where they have to be kept for any length of time care should be taken to see that they do not become chilled.

Incubation and Brooding

Where ducks are raised on a large scale the eggs are usually hatched in incubators. They take four weeks to hatch and are handled very similarly to hen's eggs, although the machine is generally run at a slightly lower temperature at first and more moisture is used throughout the hatch.

When the hatch is over the ducklings should be left until they are perfectly dry. They may then be placed in hovers heated to about 95 degrees. Ducklings can be weaned from the heat much sooner than chickens, but care should be taken to see that they are always comfortable.

Feeding the Ducklings

When the ducklings are put into the brooders they should be supplied with water. This should be given in a dish that is deep enough so that they can dabble their beaks above the nostrils, but so constructed that they cannot get into it, as young ducklings are easily chilled. If they seem slow in

finding the water it is advisable to catch a few and dip their bills into it. One lesson is usually sufficient. Water should be kept constantly within reach, otherwise the ducklings will gorge themselves when they get a chance and if the water is cold it will cause cramps, which frequently result in death. When ducklings are about thirty-six hours old they are given their first feed. This consists of stale bread soaked in milk and dried off with a mash composed of equal parts bran, shorts, and cornmeal and five per cent. coarse sand. For the first two days food is kept before them all the time, but it is changed so as not to become stale. After two days they are fed regularly four or five times a day just what they will clean up; any that is left is removed. If milk is not available the bread is soaked in water, in which case five per cent. of beef scrap is added. The bread is gradually reduced and by the time the ducklings are ten days old it is dropped entirely. Then the same mash, with the exception that the meat scrap is increased to 10 per cent., continued. A little tender green food is put in the mash after the first couple of days. This is gradually increased until there is as large a proportion of green food used as ducklings will clean up; this, will amount to twenty or thirty per cent. in bulk by the time the ducklings are a couple of weeks old. If an inclination to pick out the grain part of the mash and leave the green food is noticed, the proportion of green food is reduced.

This ration is continued for six or seven weeks, when the flock is separated according to the purposes for which they are intended. Those intended for stock purposes are given a large run where they have free access to a stream and where they will forage for most of their feed. Those intended for market are placed in the fattening pens and fed three times a day.

Rations for Fattening

For fattening the proportion of corn is increased and the bran and green food reduced. The feed at this time consists of one part bran, 2 parts shorts, 3 parts corn chop, 10 per cent. beef scrap, about 5 per cent. sand and the green food is reduced to about half what they had been consuming previously. This mash is moistened to a crumbly state with milk and an abundance of water is kept by the flock at feeding time. The ducks are marketed at eight to ten weeks of age.

"UTILITY" OR BRED-TO-LAY

(By H. D. Cantlon.)

The word "utility" left the dictionary a very decent noun meaning something that was of practical use. Anyone seeing it would naturally take it to mean just that. Applied to chickens "utility" would mean good layers, good table fowl and rapidly maturing stock. And in the generally accepted meaning of the term, a utility chicken combines these good qualities.

Yet it may be possible for a man to buy eggs advertised as being from utility stock and yet from them hatch chickens that would conform to the above type not at all. So that poultry enthusiasts may be able to separate the sheep from the goats, this article is written.

Now, what a poultry farmer means when he says "utility" stock is really full stock. He is interested in raising fancy exhibition birds which may not—usually do not—have the vigor or those qualities which characterize the truly utility bird. From most matings of exhibition birds there is a large percentage that are off color, poor in form, weak in head points, over or under size. Some birds can't be exhibited, they can't be sold as show birds, and the fancier has come to classify them as utility stock. Their offspring may possibly conform to exhibition type, although no good fancier would breed them for that purpose. It is possible that they may be good as table fowl, although in a critical market, not every breed of bird can qualify for that. But in very few cases indeed are any of them good layers. No breeder who stands high as a breeder of fine exhibition fowl selects his breeders for their egg-laying qualities. Indeed the fancy breeding stock is kept from laying in winter hatchable eggs during the hatching season. What hope is there of getting winter layers from birds raised on this plan year after year?

Now the farmer or town poultryman who is interested only in getting the largest returns in eggs from the food he buys would be certain to grade down his stock if he should introduce the culls from the fancy breeder's pens or the eggs from such

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stock. Yet he may inadvertently buy just such birds or eggs when securing the same from fancy exhibition breeders who advertise utility strains. To increase egg production requires just as careful breeding as to improve the exhibition qualities of a strain. The laying records of the hens have to be kept and the breeding stock selected from those with the highest records. Other points have to be considered. The hens must come into laying early, they must be of good form and color, keeping the type of the breed as closely as possible. The males must be bred from hens with high records.

There are poultrymen who are developing strains of layers in this manner. They do not call their strains utility strains—the word has been so abused that a new name has been adopted. Hens that are bred for their egg-laying qualities are known as bred-to-lay stock, even though the birds be Rocks, Wyandottes, or Rhode Island Reds, which are commonly recognized as utility breeds. This is the sort of poultry for everyone except the fancier.

It is natural to suppose that some bred-to-lay strains will be better than others. Some breeders are more skillful and more careful than others. Some are more scientific. When the reader of this article decides to buy hatching eggs or breeding stock with the idea of keeping hens just for laying, let him remember that some hens will lay twice as many eggs as others and that it will be cheaper for him to buy a few good hens than a flock of ordinary ones. A few good, well bred hens when well fed will pay a profit, whereas it is doubtful if cheap stock can ever be made to pay.

Get in touch with the men who breed hens to make layers of them—bred-to-lay. Ask them for the records of the hens and their breeding pens. The reliable man will give you full information and will not attempt to satisfy you with a few generalities such as "heavy winter layers," "fine, vigorous utility stock," etc. If you don't feel sure of the man you are dealing with, write to your agricultural college. The staff connected with the poultry department can help you to secure good stock. But don't buy "utility" stock from a fancier's pen if you are after a bred-to-lay strain. Hens that will lay a lot of eggs and will keep at it summer and winter are not to be found in the exhibitor's pen, who deals entirely in show birds.

THE NEST BOXES

A matter requiring careful attention, but which is frequently overlooked, is the nest boxes. These are best made of bottomless boxes, about fifteen inches square and eighteen inches high, standing upon a shelf a few inches above the ground. Fixed nest boxes should never be employed, as they are so difficult to clean, and if the greatest care is not exercised will harbor vermin and the like. They should be a few inches from the ground, because when on the floor there is a danger of the hens eating or the rats removing the eggs. There should always be a sufficient number, as when too few are supplied the hens lay about the house, and in this way the vice of egg-eating is encouraged. The nest boxes should be placed in the darkest part of the house, preferably below the window, as the less the birds are disturbed while laying, the better. More than this, if facing the door or the window, it would mean that during hot weather the sun would shine directly on the eggs, possibly starting the germ into activity, at any rate doing the eggs no good. Straw is the best material with which to litter out the nests, and oat straw is better than either wheat or barley, being more pliable. Hay is not so suitable as straw, as it is a retainer of heat, and becomes foul sooner than the latter.

FRIED CHICKEN

Cut up the bird, putting unfryable pieces on to boil. Sprinkle the rest with pepper and salt, roll in flour and fry brown in butter. Next, transfer boiled pieces and broth to frying pan. Simmer a few minutes and thicken.

Horticulture

(By Prof. W. Saxby Blair)

METHODS OF CONTROLLING CUT-WORMS

(Continued from last week.)

The Yellow-headed Cutworm

Appearance.—This Cutworm is very similar in appearance to the Glassy Cutworm; but, as its popular name indicates, it has a yellowish head. The shield behind the head is of a tawny yellow and the body of a smoky-grey colour, without markings. When mature it is about an inch and a half long.

The moth is a fairly large species, expanding when the wings are spread from an inch and three-quarters to slightly more than two inches. The front wings are reddish-brown, shading towards the base and the outer space with bluish-grey. In some specimens the cross lines are distinct being pale-yellowish in colour; in others they are darker and not so conspicuous. The same applies to the round and kidney-shaped marks. The latter one is large and more or less filled with a whitish or pale yellowish colour. At the apex of each of these wings is a pale blotch. The hind wings are brownish, the outer third being darkest; in the centre there is a dark brown spot. The thorax is the same colour as the front wings, the abdomen being paler and of a rust red shade particularly along the back.

Habits and Life-history.—The habits of this cutworm are similar to those of the Glassy Cutworm. It usually lives about 1 to 2 inches below the surface of the ground, feeding on the roots and cutting off the lower portion of the stems of oats, wheat, corn, etc. Fields of spring grain in western Ontario have been frequently injured and in some instances the crops were so badly attacked that it was necessary to replough the fields and sow to peas, or use the land for other purposes. Besides grasses, the species is also known to attack cabbage, turnip, spinach, lettuce, and other garden vegetables, as well as the young shoots of roses, currants, etc. These cutworms are mostly prevalent in May and June. We have reared the moths in eastern Ontario in the latter end of June. In 1914, one larva found at Ottawa, pupated on June 2, and the moth emerged on July 2—exactly one month later. The pupa is of the same size and colour as that of the Glassy Cutworm. Some years the moths are extremely numerous and are on the wing in June, July, and August. When they are abundant they have an annoying habit of flying into houses, getting into lamps, etc., and soiling curtains and clothes. In Canada the species is widespread, being found from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast.

The Clover Cutworm

Appearance.—This caterpillar varies considerably in colour, some specimens being distinctly green, or greenish-yellow, others quite dark above owing to brownish or blackish mottlings. Down the back is a pale yellowish central line. Between this and a broad pinkish band along the middle of the side is a broken stripe of yellow, more or less edged above with black. The pinkish colored band is bordered above and below with white or pale yellow. The spiracles, or breathing pores, are each surrounded by a blackish patch. The under surface of the body is greenish-grey with pale yellowish spots and streaks. The head is pale-yellowish, or pale-greenish, with white mottlings. When mature, this cutworm is about 2 inches in length.

The fore wings of the moth are of a yellowish-brown colour marked with gray and dark brown. The cross lines are distinct, the outer one being whitish and, in the centre, forming the letter W. Outside of this line the wings are dark. The round and kidney-shaped marks are distinct, the latter being mostly dark. The hind wings are pale to a little beyond the middle, then dusky. The thorax and abdomen are of the same general colour as the fore wings. With the wings spread the moth measures about 1½ inches in width.

Habits and Life-history.—This insect is a common species, and the larvae have on several occasions inflicted damage in Canada. In some years in Ontario, this cutworm has attracted considerable attention during August, from its ravages particularly in pea fields. Specimens of the remains of vines sent to the department showed that much of the outside fleshy covering of the pea pods had been gnawed away by caterpillars as well as all the leaves and green portions of the stems. Clover is also attacked as well as mangels, turnips, cabbages, lettuce, spinach, and other vegetables. In years of abundance when food becomes scarce, this cutworm assumes the marching habit characteristic of the true Army-worm.

The insect occurs across the breadth of the Dominion. In Ontario and the eastern provinces we have collected

the moths from late in May until Autumn; so, most probably, the species is at least double-brooded. In one breeding experiment the larva became full-grown and buried itself in the earth on August 26, and the moth did not emerge until June 8 of the following year. In Manitoba the moths have been taken commonly in August, and in Alberta in June, July and August.

The Dingy Cutworm

Appearance.—Of a dull grayish colour, marked down the middle of the back with a series of paler blotches, which almost give the appearance of a very wide dorsal band, down the centre of which is an indistinct line. Looking at the caterpillar from the side the skin between the blotches mentioned and the spiracles, or breathing pores, is dark, the wide sub-stigmatal band just below the spiracles is of a pale yellowish colour, and the side of the body below this to the feet is pale brown. The spiracles are wholly black and appear as spots along the side. The shields on the back of the first and last segments are noticeably darker than the skin of the rest of the body. The head is pale brown, with two conspicuous, curved, blackish bands down the front; in addition it is distinctly marked with a network of dark-brown. When mature it is about an inch to one and a quarter inches in length.

The moth in general, is brown in colour with a purplish tinge, the shading being greyish. The cross lines are not well defined, but the round and kidney-shaped spots are distinct, the former being open above and of the same colour as the grey shading near the upper edge of the front wings. The kidney-shaped spot is marked with reddish-brown. The claviform mark near the centre of each front wing is wholly brown defined by a black margin. Between the kidney-shaped spot and the outside margin there is a conspicuous wide, irregular greyish band. The veins near the centre are lined with white. The hind wings are whitish, shaded with brown particularly at margins. The thorax is brownish, greyish or purplish-grey at centre and on sides. The abdomen is of a pale yellowish or cream colour. With the wings expanded the moth measures from about 1¼ to 1½ inches in width.

Habits and Life-history.—In the early reports of the Division of Entomology and Botany of the Dominion Experimental Farms in which mention is made of this cutworm, the scientific name of the insect is given as *Agrotis (Feltia) subgottica* Haw. This name, in fact, has been used by economic entomologists generally in treating of the Dingy Cutworm. *Feltia* duccus Walk, however, is the common and widespread species which occurs in Canada. In Eastern Canada this cutworm has attacked all kinds of garden crops—turnips, cabbages, etc. Of late years, however, no reports indicating serious injury have been received. In the United States it is an important pest of corn, wheat, early vegetables and has even been found climbing fruit trees and shrubs to devour the buds and leaves. In the Ottawa district we have found the young larvae of *Feltia* duccus in September and the caterpillars have been found in the spring up to the end of June. About this latter time they enter the ground for pupation, and the moths emerge in July and August. In Eastern Canada the moths are some years very abundant in August and specimens have been collected up till the middle of September. In Western Canada the moths are on the wing from about the middle of July, being common in some seasons, especially in August.

The Black Army Cutworm

Appearance.—Full-grown specimens of this caterpillar are from an inch and a half to about an inch and three-quarters in length. The general colour when mature is brown with white lines and dark brown and blackish markings. Down the centre of the back is a series of velvety black, somewhat diamond-shaped marks, one on each body segment excepting the first. On each side of the back is a white line bordered above with black, and just along the lower edge of the spiracles is a wide white band, reddish-brown in the centre. Between this band and the stripe on the side of the back, the color of the skin is blackish. Before the caterpillars become full-grown they are more of a general velvety black colour, the white stripes being very conspicuous, but as they become mature they are brownish in colour the back being more or less shaded with reddish. The whole body is spotted and streaked with white. The head is yellowish-red, black in front, the shield behind the head being black. All the feet are of a pale-brownish colour.

The moth, like the caterpillar, is of rather handsome appearance, and with the wings spread it measures about an inch and a half across. The front

wings are blackish-brown shaded with black and with a more or less purplish sheen; the round or obicular spot is whitish with a few yellowish or dark brownish scales. The reniform or kidney-shaped spot is large and either distinctly yellow, reddish, or yellow and red. The double cross lines are black, excepting the sub-terminal, near the outer margin, which is whitish. In the males the lower third of the front wings is conspicuously yellowish brown. The hind wings are pale becoming brown at edge.

Habits and Life-history.—The habits of this cutworm are very similar to those of our common species; some years, in fact, it is found working in company with the White Cutworm and the Red-backed Cutworm. In years of ordinary occurrence it feeds as do these latter species, but when present in large numbers it marches ahead in swarms in true army-worm habit. In eastern Ontario its favourite food are plants belonging to the Leguminosae; cultivated peas and clover are especially attractive to the caterpillars, although asparagus and other garden vegetables are often attacked. It has also been found climbing young oak, black walnut, horse chestnut, elm, negundo and maple, which were being grown from seed on the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa. In one instance at Ottawa, the larvae in the third week of May spread from a clover field to a 3-acre field of peas, which they soon devoured almost bare. They are, in their later stages, exceedingly voracious, and in a single night do great damage. Although this insect is widely distributed in Canada, most of the complaints of injury by the caterpillars have been received from the provinces of Ontario and Quebec. From larvae collected in the field near Ottawa we have reared the adult moths, the dates of emergence being from June 15 to June 30. Outside, we have collected the moths from about the middle of June until the middle of September. The larva hibernates when about half-grown, and matures rapidly in spring, the injury being done before the end of May or early in June. The full life-history of the insect is not as yet known.

As the Black Army Cutworm becomes full-grown and disappears in most years about the end of May, it is often necessary if the farmer knows the species, to apply any remedy. It has been found where we have advised correspondents not to resow land to another crop, that the peas, or clover, recovered from the attack and, later, heavy crops were harvested.

(To be continued.)

ROAST CHICKEN

Over-seasoning mars the delicate flavor of young chicken. A little ground veal, pork sausage, or fresh pork may be mixed with the bread dressing, flavoring with savory, thyme, parsley, pepper and salt, adding butter, if meat is lean. Stuff, truss, and roast till tender in a moderate oven. When well browned, pour in salted water for brown gravy. Turn to prevent overdryness. Boil giblets, shred, mince and add to gravy before thickening.

BROILED CHICKEN

Only very young birds may be successfully broiled. Split in two, through centre of back and breast. Each half of a bird serves one person. Fasten into broiler, hold over heat (preferably wood coals), brown delicately on both sides, usually taking about 15 minutes. When done sprinkle sparingly with boiling water, then pepper and salt.

CREAMED CHICKEN

Cut the chicken into pieces right for serving. Put into saucepan, cover with water, season delicately, and boil tender. Add a cupful of thin cream or a pint of milk with a lump of butter. If cream is used, thicken before adding, if milk, let boil up, then thicken. Line a deep platter with thin pieces of toast, from which crusts have been cut. Pour gravy over it and arrange on top the pieces of chicken.

Eggs for hatching should be laid in clean nests so that there is no necessity for washing them and removing their protective covering. They should be gathered often enough to safeguard against chilling, overheating by other hens sitting on them, soiling or any other injury.

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