

In the Poultry Yard

Chicken Cholera

The disease of chicken cholera, among poultrymen, is looked upon with as much terror and abhorrence as smallpox or cholera among humanity. And indeed they may, for it produces almost as much destruction among fowls as occasional epidemics of cholera or smallpox among men. There is no other disease that produces such ravages among pigeons, turkeys, chickens, ducks and geese, as cholera, or greater financial loss. Poultrymen were seeking everywhere for a preventive or cure, but until a comparatively recent date, nothing definite was known of its cause or prevention. Science, however, has discovered the causative agent and made known rational means for its prevention. While it is somewhat complicated as yet in its application, we hail with delight its discovery and live in hopeful anticipation of a greatly improved method.

The bacilli which is responsible for the disease was first discovered in the year 1878. It was at that time that they belonged to a class known as cocci, or sphere, from their resemblance to small berries, but later investigation proved them to belong to a class of germs known as bacilli. They are short, broad bacilli with rounded ends, sometimes united to each other, forming moderately long chains.

When examined in the living condition they are found to be non-motile. They are cultured usually upon gelatin plates. They are, however, grown upon potato—agar and blood serum. The introduction of cultures into the tissues of chickens, geese, pigeons and sparrows, is sufficient to produce fatal septicemia, or blood poison. Feeding them with material infected with bacilli is also sufficient to produce the disease with pronounced intestinal lesions.

The autopsy shows that when the bacilli are introduced beneath the skin, a true septicemia or blood poisoning, as it is termed by the laity, results. The liver and spleen are enlarged; circumscribed hemorrhagic (blood spots) and infiltrated areas occur in the lungs; the intestines show an intense inflammation with red and swollen mucous membrane, and occasional ulcers following hemorrhagic or blood spots. The bacilli are found in the organs. If, on the other hand, the disease has been produced by feeding, the bacilli are chiefly to be found in the intestines.

After having introduced the bacilli purposely beneath the skin of the fowl, or introduced into the intestines by feeding, a condition of weakness and apathy arises which causes them to remain quiet, seemingly almost paralyzed, with ruffled up feathers. The eyes are closed shortly after the illness begins, and the birds gradually fall into a stupor from which they do not awaken. The disease leads to a fatal termination in twenty-four to forty-eight hours. During its course there is a profuse diarrhea, the frequent fluid, slimy, grayish white discharges containing numerous bacilli.

The bacilli of chicken cholera is one whose peculiarities can be made use of for protective vaccination. When cultures are allowed to remain undisturbed for several months, their virulence is greatly lessened, and new cultures planted from these are also attenuated. When chickens are inoculated with such cultures, no other disease occurs other than a local inflammatory reaction, by which the

birds are protected against virulent bacilli.

From these observations a system of protective vaccination has been worked out, in which fowls can be protected by first inoculating them with a very weak, then stronger, and finally with highly virulent cultures, with resulting protection and immunity. The unfortunate feature, however, is that it is somewhat complicated for general use.—Henry Wolf.

Helps to Beginners

Experience is a good teacher and one that makes a lasting impression upon the learner.

Farmer B— had read in his county paper that there would be a farmers' institute at the cross-roads and at the request of his wife, he tended the meeting though he had no faith in them. The afternoon session was given to the interest of poultry culture and the gentleman who had charge of the meeting was a regular poultry crank. In the course of the meeting the question of "thoroughbred poultry" came up for discussion and then a round table meeting was in order, and the poultryman asked and answered questions in a way that made halters throw away their crutches and sign right before the president for a poultry paper.

"It was remarkable the way the old farmers were took in" that day and among them was Farmer B—.

He always thought the dung-hill fowls were good enough for him till he heard one of them big fellows make them out the poorest scrubs and animals under heaven, and even hinted that a man who was guilty of breeding such monstrosities should be tattooed or something like it.

Our good friend came home all in a glee. The entire evening was spent in reading the poultry papers gotten at the institute. The second evening was spent in reading every advertisement in the papers and the third evening topped the climax by a gentleman in Ohio receiving an order for a ten-dollar rooster, as the farmer wrote it in his letter: "I want a good fellow, remember. A full bred-blooded Barred Rock rooster and one that will weigh twelve pounds or more."

In due time the bird came. He did not weigh twelve pounds nor ten pounds. He was but a cockerel and rather gangling, but he had the bones and the making of a fine bird.

He was the talk of the community. All in all the farmer liked him and so he wrote to the Ohio breeder. Time went by and a big white feather put in its appearance in the tail. It did not scare the farmer, as he thought that was the nature of the creature. Soon the majority of the tail feathers were white, and then came some on the neck, but the innocent farmer did not think there was anything wrong, and time went by. One day he caught the fellow to lift him and he felt some fuzz on his legs and soon he had feet on him something like a Clydesdale horse. Every week the feathers grew longer, and every month the bird got bigger, and he was the biggest fellow in the country, but he did not look like a Barred Rock rooster. Till the 1st of October he was something in looks like Jacob's ring-streaked and striped cattle.

Some people called the farmer a fool and told him he was cheated, and that he ought to write that breeder a sassy letter and demand the return of his money, but do you

know, dear reader, when that farmer was brought to task about it by his good, indulgent wife, he said: "Mandy, fur the life of me, I can't tell whether I ordered a Rock rooster or a Dark Brahmy, but I feel sartin I got just what I ordered!"

WM. HARRIS GUYER,
Inland Poultry Journal.

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