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Selecting the Layers

By M. A. Gull.

SINCE a good laying hen was never so profitable nor a poor layer so expensive, it behooves every farmer to give due consideration to the proper selection of his layers for next season. Not every farmer is able to use a trap-net, and while this is the only way by which individual production can be determined, nevertheless there are other ways of selecting the good from the poor layers. Our present state of poultry breeding does not warrant keeping hens over two years old for laying purposes, although the time may come when hens will be profitable producers for four or five years. Owing to the fact that pullets are so much better layers than yearlings the bulk of the farm flock should consist of pullets, a few yearlings being kept as breeders.

Go over the flock of hens now and cut out the poor layers. The best layers are usually those moulting late in the season, and some of them take quite a long time to moult laying all the while. The most active hens are usually the best layers. Hens which are excessively fat are usually poor layers. Handle each hen carefully and examine the pelvic bones which run along each side of the body and approximate each other just below the vent. The farther apart these bones the better is the chance of the hen being a good layer. If they are only a finger's width apart she is not laying. By examining the hens once a month for two or three months the poor layers can be culled out.

The growing stock should be looked upon as the chief source of supply of winter eggs. Observe the chickens from time to time and note particularly those which mature early. Pullets should be in good laying condition by the middle of October but they may commence to lay when practically mature so that it is necessary to keep them growing rapidly. Usually these pullets which feather most rapidly make the best layers. When all approaches select the ones that are in good health, with bright red combs and with good width between the pelvic bones, for as laying commences these bones get wider apart. Above all, select healthy vigorous birds.—Journal of Agriculture.

Poultry Points

By J. E. Bergey.

REMEMBER that sour milk or buttermilk will make excellent feed for both growing chickens or laying hens. Try some and see the difference it makes.

Are your chickens dumplish and not giving well? If so, look out for mites. These parasites are very active during warm weather and will prevent the birds from doing well. Remember that mites live on the roosts, in cracks and joints of the coop or other hiding places during the day. By soaking these places with a liquid kerosene or a solution of four parts coal oil and one part carbolic about once every two weeks, no trouble is likely to be had with them. The same treatment is good in the hen house. Be sure to have all the infertile eggs put down there you need for the winter. You will then be in a position to sell the fresh eggs you get during the late fall and winter for a high price.

Rear Pullets or Buy Them?

An experiment carried on at the Experimental Farm, Ottawa, in the spring of 1917 with Leghorns, showed the sale of the cockerels paid all

expenses for incubation, brooding and feed for themselves and pullets up until the first of September. When the pullets went into winter quarters on November 1st, they had cost over and above what had been paid by the sale of the cockerels just 2.9 cents each. This experiment showed not only that it paid to sell the cockerels early, but it also demonstrated that pullets could be raised much cheaper than they could be bought in the fall.

Why Force the Molt?

POULTRY keepers, lots of them, still cling to the idea that, if hens can be induced to moult early, they will be greater egg producers the succeeding winter. "However, this is not the fact," says Mr. Barto, of Cornell. "A very careful and thorough experiment to test this question was conducted a few years ago at Cornell University Poultry Experiment Station. The method that is used to produce rapid moulting is to starve the flock for about three weeks by cutting the ration to one-third the usual amount and then rapidly increasing the feed to all the birds can be induced to consume. This causes a rather sudden dropping of the old feathers, but the Cornell Experiment Station found that the hens thus treated produced fewer eggs during the fall and winter and at a greater cost per dozen than did the hens fed normally."

"It is better to feed the fowls an abundance of nutritious food, quite rich in protein and fats, during the moulting season, but not to attempt to force the moult by any patent stimulating foods."

British Poultry Rations

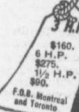
THE feeding of live stock in the British Isles since the war began has been, if anything, a most difficult problem than the feeding of the British people. This is particularly the case with poultry, which consumes feed that may be also used in the human ration. As a result of the stringent reduction in the allotments of food for poultry the hen population of the British Isles has been reduced very appreciably in fact, last four years. In order to ensure that this reduction will be largely confined to inferior flocks and to maintain the best strains of poultry in the country, the government differentiates in the allowance made according to the quality of the bird.

All of the flocks in the country, so we understand, have been graded according to quality and utility value. In order to obtain a special ration of four ounces per bird per day, half grain and half mash in dry form, fowl are classified into first grade and second grade breeding stock. To come in the first category fowls must be (a) utility-breeding stock for egg production, or of utility quality; (b) pure bred stock; (c) the health of the flock must be high; (d) for a period of at least two years the stock must have been bred to meet the above requirements; (e) the owner of the flock must undertake, in consideration of receiving preferential treatment, to supply the public with hatching eggs, day old chicks and older stock at a cost no greater than his 1917 charges; (f) selective breeding must have been practised in the flock.

Second grade birds will receive rations only after the requirements of the first grade have been satisfied. A certain proportion of the allotted foods will be reserved for the preservation of the best utility stock of ducks, turkeys and geese. The ultimate working out of this plan, dictated by war time necessity, will be a remarkable improvement in the quality of the poultry of the United Kingdom.

We had the hardest storm Friday that ever has been here. It blew down trees that were never blown down before.—Greenacres Banner.

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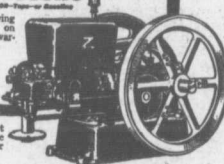
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