

HARMLESS WAY TO STOP BROODY HENS

Sitting Inclination Must be Discouraged at Once to Maintain Egg Yield.

SLATTED-BOTTOM COOP

Cruelty Is All Wrong—Feed and Water Liberally to Stimulate Production.

By H. ARMSTRONG ROBERTS
All hens are prone to become broody at times, especially at this season. Even the so-called non-setting varieties, such as the Leghorns, become broody. If this broodiness is tolerated, if the hens are permitted to remain on the nests, they are soon thrown out of laying condition, and the egg yield from the flock will diminish at an alarming rate.

Furthermore, if hot weather is at hand, broodiness will hasten the molt, and to the undernourished condition of the broody hens. Needless to say, an early molt is detrimental to a heavy egg yield.

Broodiness must be discouraged at the earliest moment if the poultryman expects to maintain his egg supply through the summer months. Hens found on the nests after night-fall should be removed to a special pen wherein efforts are made to break up the inclination.

Eggs are laid in sequences or series sometime called "clutches." Between series there is a rest period, maybe a couple of days, maybe a week or longer, depending upon the productive uses of the hen.

At such time it is natural for the hen to become broody and show signs of a maternal instinct—a desire to hatch and rear a brood of chicks. Undisturbed, this inclination grows upon the hen; very soon she becomes an out-and-out sitter. On the other hand, if the inclination is discovered, if she is driven from the nest and kept from the nest or anything that resembles a nest, particularly if she is kept from any seclusion or privacy, it usually follows that she abandons the idea in a day or two and returns to the rest of the flock, whereupon the succeeding series of eggs is developed and she goes on laying.

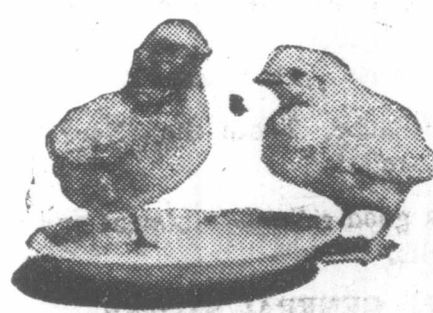
Broodiness Hastens the Molt.
Let a hen dwell upon the nest for a week or two and the next series of eggs ceases to develop. The egg organs revert to a dormant, contracted state, from which it may take a month or two to stimulate them to the point of production. Meanwhile, the season has advanced and there is risk of the hen entering the molt before she resumes laying.

Many practices have been devised for breaking up broody hens, and in the past many of them, in fact, most of them, have depended upon some form of punishment. This is all wrong. It is perfectly natural for the hen to want to hatch her eggs. Except for this instinct, in the days before incubators came into general use, rearing young stock would have been exceedingly troublesome, if not impossible.

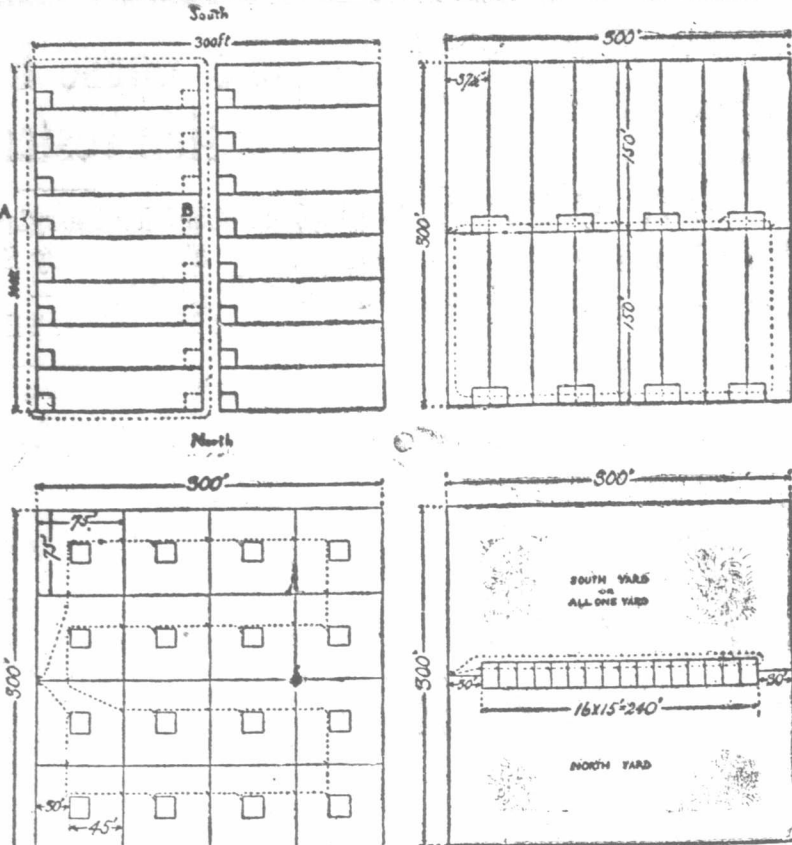
Thus, to inflict harsh treatment on the hen simply because she responds to the natural impulse is unreasonable, cruel and inhuman. Apart from these considerations, top unhappiness or ill-treat a hen runs counter to the caretaker's best interests. Bad treatment further retards egg production, whereas production should be encouraged, stimulated.

Water cures, starvation, exposure and similar methods are not to be recommended under any circumstances. And they are unnecessary. It must be admitted, of course, that most sitting hens are perverse and trying to one's patience. Sometimes the most patient caretaker is moved to a spirit of "What wouldn't I give to wring that chicken's neck!" But don't fall for the temptation, because it is in the nature of a hen to be persistent. If it were not so she would not remain faithful to the work of laying.

Slatted-Bottom Coop Method.
One of the best schemes to discourage broodiness, widely used and endorsed by the foremost authorities,



is to place the broody hen in a coop that is fitted with a slatted bottom. The hen is unable to squat in a comfortable position, because her feet protrude through the openings between the slats. She has no sense of privacy, and the sensation of currents of air under her is not to her liking.



Two or three days of this harmless pillory usually disposes her with the notion of setting, and when released she is only too anxious to rejoin her companions in the laying house.

It is understood that food and water are kept in the coop at all times, for the "clucks" should be encouraged to maintain their physical trim and not be starved. The coop should be kept in a well-ventilated place, under perfect sanitary conditions, preferably where there is string light, because plenty of light is distracting to the sitting hen, who naturally seeks a dark, secluded spot in which to

bring off her brood.

In mild, pleasant weather the "broodies" can be turned into a yard and made to sleep outdoors. Do what you will with them to distract the inclination to sit, provided they are not injured, frightened or impaired in any way. By all means feed and water them liberally.

The chief consideration is to segregate the hens as soon as they become broody, if possible on the first day. A hen removed from the nest at this time is very much easier to discourage than when she has been allowed to indulge her fancy for a week or more.

To insure getting the "broodies" at an early stage, the poultry keeper should make it a hard and fast rule to go over the nests every evening about an hour before sundown, during the spring and summer months, and to remove therefrom any hens found at this time. Very few hens lay after 4 o'clock in the afternoon, consequently one is entitled to view with suspicion any fowls found on the nests in the evening.

Blood Streaks in Fresh Eggs

Spring is the season when poultrymen are bothered with the greatest numbers of eggs containing blood spots. It is natural enough to expect such irregularities because of the high yields. As yet no remedy has been found for this trouble. The only way to protect the buyer against blood

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clots is to candle the eggs.

Clots and blood streaks are formed by tiny ruptures at the time the yolk is dropped from the ovary into the oviduct, during the last stage in the formation of the egg. The membrane that incloses the yolk splits a trifle, there is a tiny hemorrhage, just a drop or two of blood, which goes along with the yolk and is inclosed in the shell.

This clot does not impair the quality of the egg so far as it affects appearance. When cooked the clot or streak turns brown, and the house-wife is likely to assume that

the egg is bad.

The worm-eating instinct is so great among chicks that they are attracted by each other's toes. They pick at them, thinking no doubt that the toes are worms. Often this starts blood. Once the chicks get a taste of blood they become cannibals forthwith. Chicks with bloody toes should be removed from the flock as soon as discovered, before the habit of toe-pecking spreads throughout the brood. It is a most troublesome vice and will cause considerable mortality in short order.

The real cause of the trouble is in keeping the chicks too closely confined indoors and with nothing to occupy their attention. Give them more freedom outdoors, or if they must be confined, keep them hustling in litter for scratch grains.

Blood will tell in poultry raising, as with any form of livestock. If your flock failed to average ten dozen eggs per hen last year, don't breed from it. Buy some eggs or chicks from stock with the "lay" breed in the birds. Laying ability is more or less of a cultivated thing, obtained by careful selection in matings, extending over a number of years.

Race horses are not raised from cart-horse stock; cows with big milk records are not obtained from scrubs, and for the same reason high producing hens are not descended from mongrels. They haven't the right sort of

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Conditions That Cause Runts.

Culls and runts are usually made in the first three weeks of a chicken's life. Anything that gives the brood a set-back at this time, such as vermin, overcrowding, improper feeding and lack of exercise, is almost certain to leave a permanent handicap.

Once a runt, always a runt, is a pretty safe estimate, generally speaking. The runt eats as much as a thirty chicken, but it seems to derive no benefit from the food. It is stunted and straggly. It seldom pays to bother with such birds. Better kill them for the home table. You save that much feed and improve the appearance of the flock.

If the incubator is run too high in temperature it will produce a premature hatch; if it is run too low it will produce a delayed hatch, and both are bad. Hens' eggs should commence to pip on the twentieth day, and the hatch should be completed the day following.

Chickens were never intended to thrive on bare ground. Dig up the yards and runs and sow them to rye, oats or rape, or a combination of these, which purifies the soil and furnishes green food.

Muslin curtains and screens which were used in the fronts of houses last winter, and which are no longer required, should be brushed off, marked with the number of the house or location and put away under cover for safekeeping. A loft is a convenient storage place. Don't keep them out in the weather unnecessarily. The muslin or other fabric coverings has to be replaced all too quickly at best.

It is safe to ship baby chicks any distance that can be covered in forty-eight hours' transportation, provided the little fellows are started on their journey shortly after they are hatched.

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HEALTH HINTS

To cure a headache, Nurse says to make a weak cup of tea, adding four cloves to it. Drink it as hot as possible. After the tea has been taken it is a good plan to lie down flat on the back for ten or fifteen minutes. Bathing the head in cold water, to which a teaspoon of common salt has been added, is also a good thing, and it helps to reduce the temperature of the head.

After a headache has stopped a little it is a good thing to take a bath in salt water. It is very stimulating and, as a headache is very fatiguing, the body should be toned up again. A cup of salt to a tub of water is about the right proportion.

If you do not care for the salt bath try a salt rub. Wring a heavy Turkish towel that has been dipped in salt water, fairly dry and leave for half an hour. Then rub the body with it. Another way is to get into the tub and then stop right out again. Rub the body well with salt and let it stay on for half an hour. Then rub off.

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