



FIG 1.—GOOD FEEDING TYPE.

POULTRY.

Good and Bad Types of Market Fowls.

To the Editor "Farmer's Advocate":

Sir.—Since Canada started to export dressed poultry to England, the prices have risen rapidly, from twenty-five to fifty per cent. more than they were some four years ago. Farmers are now being paid for their poultry according to weight, the result being we have had a great demand for large birds. Are these large, overgrown specimens the best class to grow? Are they as profitable as the medium-sized breed? Having carefully observed and noted birds, alive and dressed, of the various types of the same breed, I have been very much impressed with the lack of uniformity of the product, and, in many instances, the very poor quality of the dressed stock. True, we have made great strides in our dressed poultry, and what was considered prime stock five years ago is now only ordinary. Yet, with all the work that has been done by the Ontario and Dominion Governments, we have still great quantities of birds marketed in poor flesh.

In looking over dressed poultry in some of the exporters' shops, I have often thought how easily it would be to improve the appearance of much of the ordinary poultry, and some of that which is especially fattened, only to a lesser degree, if the birds had been bred to a proper type. I have spent much time in carefully examining different types of birds, alive and dressed, also, noting the feeding capacity of some types of birds, although regarding this latter point, it would take years to arrive at any definite conclusions.

One of the most important points is constitution. This may have no actual market value, but it certainly has much to do with the bird's ability to grow and put on flesh. What we want is a good feeder and an economical producer. Generally, a bird with a short, stout, well-curved beak, a broad head, not too long, and a bright, clear eye, will have plenty of constitution. And furthermore, I have noticed that when a bird has a long narrow beak, a thin, long comb and head, and an eye somewhat sunken in the head, it is lacking in constitution. It has a narrow, long body, and in many cases legs which are long, and upon which the fowls seldom stand straight. There are some exceptions to these points; yet, upon the average, if a bird has a good head, the chances are favorable for a good body, and if a poor head, the opposite may be said. I have frequently noticed in rose-comb breeds, such as Wyandottes, that you seldom see a good-shaped one that has a long, narrow comb.

The neck should be moderately short and stout, indicating vigor. The breast is the most important point in a market chicken. It should be broad, moderately deep, and if fairly long it will present a fine appearance and appear well-fleshed. It is quite possible that a broad, deep breast will carry more meat than a moderately deep breast of the same width, yet there is no doubt but that the latter will present much the better appearance, and thereby sell quicker and at a higher price in the market.

When considering the length of breast, we must try and get it to come well forward (see Fig. 1), and not cut off at an angle, as seen in Fig. 2. The body in general should present the appearance of an oblong when the head, neck and tail are removed. We frequently see birds that are very flat in front and cut up behind. This class of chicken gives a very short breast, and if it happens to be deep, you will have, when dressed, about as poor a looking chicken as one could wish to see, there being a lack of width and length of breast, with excessive depth. In Fig. 2 note the very flat breast, the length of back, the long neck and head, the narrow comb, the sunken eye, and the length of legs. The breast comes fairly well back, but not well forward. In Fig. 1 the bill is short and stout, but not as well curved as I would like. Note the breadth of head, the prominence and brightness of the eye, the short, stout neck, the great width of the breast, the fullness caused largely by the breast-bone extending well forward, the short, stout legs, that are straight under the body, and the width between the legs. There is an expression about this chicken that impresses one as being the essence of vigor.

The back should be broad to give lung and heart capacity, and, further, this width should extend well back to the tail-head. Avoid the wedge-shaped back as seen in some fowls that have great width at the shoulders and taper rapidly towards the tail-head.

It is much easier to get well-shaped market females than it is to get good cockerels. Our market is demanding a five-pound bird when dressed. Farmers have gone to raising big chickens, and are asking for large, overgrown cockerels for breeders, and, further, birds that have excessive depth. The result is, we get dressed chickens weighing four to five pounds each, that have

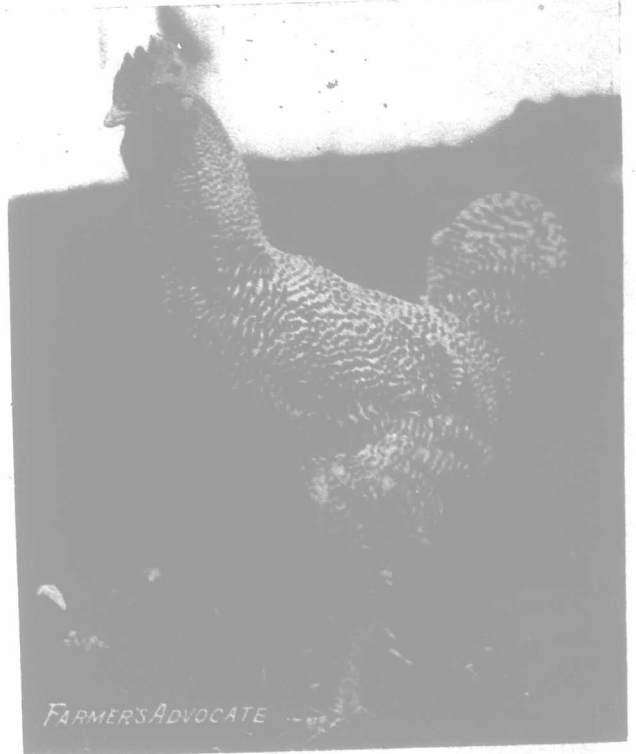


FIG 2.—POOR FEEDING TYPE.

immense, high breast-bones and very long legs. These are not attractive to the buyers, and sell at less price per pound than plumper birds. For example, if given two birds of the same width of breast, one is one and a half inches deeper in the breast than the other, the result will be, the one bird looks plump and sells readily, the other lacks plumpness and sells slow. This can be bred out by using such males as Fig. 1.

Poultry Dept., O. A. C. W. R. GRAHAM.

Keep a Pure-bred Flock.

On the ordinary farm where poultry are kept for utility purposes only, there are several advantages in favor of keeping but one breed, instead of a mixture of several. A flock of pure Wyandotte or Rock hens of any class present a beautiful if not a prosperous appearance in a farmyard. Some people think that pure-bred poultry cost more to breed and give less in return than cross-breeds. This is an absurd idea, founded neither on fact nor reason. Where a good strain is selected and carefully bred, a flock may be reared to give returns of the highest order. Money may be made from a pure flock in every way in which those of mixed breeding are known to be useful, and in addition, eggs may be sold for hatching, the best pullets and cockerels for breeding purposes; and the dressed birds for the open market, at a higher rate than the average, because of their uniformity in shape and color of skin. Be careful in deciding what breed is best adapted to your conditions and when you have made a start don't be carried away by fads. For the farmer, Wyandottes, Rocks or Orpingtons are generally considered most suitable. Give this matter some thought and we are satisfied you will consider the suggestion a good one.



GENERAL ROUND-UP, SOUTHERN ALBERTA.