

breeding purposes. Buying those from flocks selected only from appearances, with no record kept of the performance of the individuals, is, to say the least, a great game of chance. It may be the selected bird will be from the least profitable hen in the flock. And like produces like.

I find the male bird has a wonderful influence over the pullets he sires in regard to egg production. His get will lay eggs very much like the hens of his strain in color, shape and size.

The writer happens to know a man who claims to have lost over \$50.00 in a year's eggs from 75 pullets he raised from a male bird bred from hens said to be persistent layers but not trap-nested. He says that if those hens, as a flock, were what they were represented, his bird must have come from the poorest hen in the flock. He claims that his yield for the year was easily three dozen eggs per pullet short of that given by their mothers during their first year. That is pretty good evidence as to the damage done by purchasing at random. We have failures and disappointments enough when we do our best, and should not allow ourselves to be caught napping.

If we breed from the hens which make the money, we will raise pullets which will in turn make money also, providing the male bird was the right sort. The only means we have of knowing is by the use of the trap-nests. We can guess at it without them, but guessing contests in the hen pen are not profitable. J. R. H. Wentworth Co., Ont.

### FEEDING POULTRY.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

Feed your hens the right way, and they will make you from two to four dollars per hen each year in eggs alone.

There is much said in poultry journals of the necessity of hens being made to scratch to maintain health. By the ordinary method of feeding, two or three times a day, there is no doubt whatever but by this method the hen becomes excessively hungry, and by force of habit she becomes a gourmandizer. To protect herself against these periodical hungers she overloads her crop, and as the food soon passes through her system the digestive organs are overtaxed, but at the same time she gets hungry for the next meal. The hen's system becoming out of order by man's methods, he then tries to overcome his faults by making the hen overwork herself to get rid of this excess of food. With sufficient food furnished to hens at all times by the box method, the hens would have no occasion to scramble after food as a lot of schoolboys would for a handful of coppers thrown among a crowd of them. It may look unreasonable, but it seems to be a positive fact that hens do consume less grain, have better health, and give a greater egg yield when they are continuously fed by the box method than they do under ordinary methods usually employed on poultry plans. It is natural for the hen to pick, pick, pick, all day long, and when a self-acting food box is so arranged that the hen cannot waste the food by scratching it about in filth (as is often common), her appetite is always appeased, she is contented and happy, healthy, and an egg producer. I give the hen credit for having sufficient sense to know when to eat and what to eat. I believe the Creator of the Universe endowed hens with sufficient instinct to care for themselves. Can the leopard change his spots? If so, man may change the hen to his way of feeding, but sometime, perhaps, he will discover that the hen was right after all. Do not forget that it is a very hard day's work for a hen to produce one egg; therefore, she needs a liberal supply of food at all times for her to do her best.

### WHAT AND HOW TO FEED.

Every morning scatter one pint of wheat in the litter to every fifteen hens. Keep in the hopper feed boxes all the time a mixture of the following: whole grain, two bushels of oats, one bushel of corn, half a bushel of barley and half a bushel of buckwheat, all mixed together. At noon feed mangels or cabbage, and the evening meal as follows: One bushel of corn, two bushels of oats, ground together; add to this one hundred pounds of bran, well mixed, moisten with hot water, or, better, milk, and feed what the fowls will eat up clean in fifteen minutes. Feed green-cut bone or beef scraps three times a week,  $\frac{1}{4}$  oz. for each hen (it can be mixed into the evening feed), and also all table waste. One evening in each week give a feed of parched whole corn, warm but not hot, instead of the mash; also, three evenings in the week add to the mash two handfuls of linseed meal for every 40 hens. If this method of feeding does not produce plenty of eggs, then you have not egg-producing birds. I have but one remedy for poultry diseases, and that is the hatchet. How about this, reader? Is it a case of considerable surgical work at the start (with the hatchet), resulting in the production of none but vigorous, thrifty, healthy fowls? The writer has precious little faith in doctoring poultry, and, as a rule, the time, labor and money spent in doctoring poultry of average value is that much wasted. To use mild remedies for slight ills is all right, but be careful. It is with fowls as with people. Study how to keep in health, that is the better plan. Many and many a fowl is used as a breeder, and is valued highly, that would be far more profitable to the owner dead and well buried. A. DOUPE.

Middlesex Co., Ont.

### THE COLONY HOUSE.

AN ECONOMICAL AND EFFECTIVE PLAN OF HOUSING POULTRY.

The address on "Colony Houses," by F. C. Elford, Manager of the Poultry Department of Macdonald College, at the Ontario Winter Fair, serves to emphasize yet again the principle repeatedly enunciated through "The Farmer's Advocate," that the trend of the times is toward simplicity in the housing and care of all kinds of stock, from poultry to cattle. The colony house for poultry is simplicity itself, and the results obtained by Mr. Elford on the College Farm at Ste. Anne de Bellevue are striking testimony to its effectiveness, not only as a means of housing young market poultry, but the laying flock as well. An illustrated description of the colony houses on the Macdonald College Farm appeared in "The Farmer's Advocate" of October 24th, 1907, but the importance and comparative novelty of the subject may warrant some repetition.

### WHAT IS A COLONY HOUSE?

Mr. Elford defines a colony house as one where the fowls contained all live together as one family. It may be of many sizes and shapes. The advantages claimed for it are cheapness and effectiveness. It is cheap because of its construction, and because little or no fencing is required to divide the several pens of fowls. On the Macdonald College Farm they have two sizes of colony houses, one for 25 birds, and one for 50. The 25-hen house is 8 x 12 feet. The floor rests on two runners, which may be flattened rails or poles, or, preferably, squared cedar of 6 x 8-inch dimension. These runners are placed two feet under each side of the house, and extend a foot at each end. The siding is one thickness of inch sheathing of planed, tongued-and-grooved pine; any rough lumber will do if battened. The east end, and two feet of the east end of each side is double-boarded, to protect the roosts,



Count Mysie.

Young Shorthorn bull from dairy-type dam, in the herd of A. W. Smith, Maple Lodge, Ont. See Gossip, page 63.

which are in this end. The house requires to build it, 1,100 feet of lumber, and two squares of roofing paper. A handy farmer, who can do the work himself, could place one on his farm for about \$25, or one dollar per head of poultry accommodated. The cost of many of the long, continuous houses formerly advocated was \$3, \$7 and \$8, and occasionally \$10, per hen, which is too much capital to expect a hen to pay the interest on, and at the same time make good a sinking fund.

### THE COLONY HOUSE IS CHEAP AND SIMPLE.

The cheaper the poultry house, the better, so long as it is effective. The colony house is cheap and simple. Not only its construction but its internal fixtures are simple. The floor is of wood, for the sake of convenience. The roosts are hinged to the east wall, and a curtain is provided, to be let down in front of the birds on the coldest nights. There is no dropping-board. The dropping-board entails a great deal of work, and in winter time, especially, is very unsightly. Instead, the litter under the roosts is cleaned out once a week in summer, and once a month in winter, and fresh litter placed in it. The reason it is not necessary to clean the pens oftener in winter is that the droppings all freeze quickly, and the pen appears to be quite dry and sanitary. Where the winters are more open, more frequent attention would be demanded. Six nests are placed at the left of the door, which is at the end opposite the roosts. There is a hopper for dry feed that holds a sack of bran, which the hens eat readily, and another smaller hopper for grit, beef scrap and oyster shell. A six-inch board on edge under the nests encloses the material for a dust bath. All the fixtures are movable.

Now, as to fences: in the case of the old style of continuous house, with yards fenced off for

each pen, these cost probably half as much as the house. The colony house may be hauled out in summer to a field or orchard, or anywhere it may be accommodated. If there are a large number on the farm, a little fencing may be required, but comparatively little.

### ECONOMICAL FROM A FEED STANDPOINT.

The colony-house system is economical from a feed standpoint. Not that the fowls will eat less than an equal number otherwise housed, but they have a better chance to forage. Since their building, which is closed up at night to exclude prowlers, may be moved readily in the morning to a stubble field, pasture field, cornfield or orchard, or wherever grain is going to waste, they have a good chance to consume what would otherwise be waste, and therefore require so much less merchantable feed.

### ADAPTED TO A LABOR-SAVING METHOD OF FEEDING.

Again, as to labor, the colony-house plan lends itself to a system of feeding that requires a minimum of work. The grain and other feed may be fed by filling the hoppers once a week. While the hopper-feeding system is not a success under all conditions, it can be made a success in colony houses where the fowls have free range and exercise.

### ECONOMIZES POULTRY FERTILIZER.

Then, as to fertilizer, by using the colony house, we distribute the fertilizer over the fields where it is needed, instead of having it accumulating to saturate the ground about the buildings. According to experiments, the fertilizing value of the droppings of one hen during a year is from 30 to 50 cents, which is an item worth saving.

### ADVANTAGES OF PORTABILITY.

The question now comes, is it effective? Does it fulfill the requirements and meet all the conditions of successful poultry-keeping? Here are some of the advantages: In the spring, one can give the birds sunshine by running the house into a bright, sunshiny spot, or onto the driest site available. In the summer it can be moved into an orchard, or any other shade. If no such shade is available, put a block under the corners. One way or another, Mr. Elford finds it easy to keep the hens comfortable in warm weather.

### GIVES GOOD RESULTS IN WINTER.

How about the winter? As soon as the frost or snow comes, hitch on and bring the houses up near the buildings for convenience and shelter. Bank them up a little with snow, or, if there is no snow, throw some litter from the pens around them. At Macdonald College, the winters are cold—28 to 30 degrees below zero for days at a time, with a strong east wind besides, yet there was not a day last winter when their hens were not comfortable and laying eggs, and there were only three or four days during the winter when the houses were not opened up. The hens didn't freeze; under ordinary conditions, a healthy hen can't freeze. They had the temperature down to 18 degrees below zero in the house at night, and not a comb was frosted. They had, however, only the utility breeds, and didn't know how some of the larger-combed varieties might do.

### THE STRAW LOFT SECURES DRYNESS AND VENTILATION.

The houses were always dry inside, without frost. Mr. Elford says he has never been able to write his name on the wall. The house is well ventilated. Overhead is a loft filled with straw, and a little door opens into the gable end above. This little door is always open when the larger door below, or else the window, cannot be opened, and most of the time even then. The straw acts as a filter to admit the fresh and let out the foul air, without causing perceptible drafts. The straw, moreover, tends to absorb moisture, which is gradually evaporated and carried off.

### RESULTS IN EGG PRODUCTION.

The proof of the henhouse is in the eggs. They had 230 hens last winter at the Macdonald College Farm. Some of them were good, and some of them very ordinary layers. In eleven months they laid 28,314 eggs, or an average of 122½ each. But in the four winter months, December, January, February and March, the 231 hens laid 10,347 eggs, and in the other seven months, 17,967 eggs, or a larger average during the winter months than throughout the rest of the year, which shows that the houses answered pretty well for the winter months, and must have been comfortable. To put it another way, the receipts from eggs during the eleven months were \$887.66, of which \$431.12 were made up during the four winter months, and \$456.54 during the remaining seven; or, taking it from the standpoint of net revenue, the figures for the 11 months were \$582.74, of which \$320.24 was made up in the four winter months, and only \$262.50 during the remaining seven. That is to say, the hens gave a larger total net revenue during the four winter months than during the other seven.

### VIGOR AND FERTILITY.

Now, as to fertility, the hens were maintained