



GOOSE BREEDING. (Continued.)

Editor's Note—We are indebted to Mr. A. A. Brigham, Ph.D., director of the Rhode Island Agricultural Experiment Station, for advance proofs of this most valuable and comprehensive article on "Goose Culture," and also for procuring for us duplicates of some of the engravings to be used in connection with the Report. The copies of Review containing this series of articles should be carefully preserved for future guidance. The first part appeared in November Review.

AS soon as the bird is picked the blood is rinsed from the head and mouth, the bird is placed upon its back, and a string tied tightly around the middle of the body, pressing the wings firmly against the sides. Fairly stout white cotton twine is generally used for this purpose, but mongrel geese, for the Christmas trade, are sometimes tied with a narrow, colored tape, or braid, which adds somewhat to the appearance of birds designed for a fancy trade. Appearance has much to do with the selling value of geese as well as of any product put upon the market.

The wings are pressed slightly toward the back in tying, and their natural elasticity forces the breast meat and fat upwards so that the bird looks plump, if well dressed and the cord is tight.

Some fatteners break down the breast-bone before tying. To do this the bird is laid on its back on a solid bench, the breast is covered with several thicknesses of damp cloth, and two or three blows on the breast-bone given with a wooden paddle made from a piece of smooth oak board, about an

inch thick and perhaps six inches wide. Just enough force should be used to crush down the rib bones, so as to settle the breast-bone down somewhat the object being to give the breast a plump, meaty appearance. After the wings are closely tied against the body, and the blood has been rinsed from the head, the bird is immersed in ice water, barrels usually being provided for this purpose. In warm weather, when green goslings are usually dressed, they are kept in these barrels of ice and water until sent to market. The birds should be freshly packed in ice and clean water as soon as the bodily heat is thoroughly taken out of them.

They are shipped to market by packing in boxes or barrels with broken ice. The quantity of ice used depends upon the temperature of the weather at the time and the distance to which they have to be shipped. Before packing, the goslings should be removed from the barrels of ice water and laid upon boards or benches to allow the water to drain from them. In packing the head of the gosling is placed against the side of the bird, which is then packed back downward on a layer of cracked ice in the box or barrel. After enough have been packed to make a layer, cracked ice is put in and another layer placed upon them until the package is full. Sugar barrels are often used for shipping. One or two holes should be bored in the bottom to allow surplus water to drain away. A good layer of ice should be used at the top of the barrel, which can then be covered with two or three thicknesses of burlap.

Green goslings are never drawn for market. The shrinkage in

dressing is comparatively small, as only the blood and feathers are lost. It occasionally happens that a specimen will absorb sufficient ice water so that the dressed weight will equal the live weight of the bird. As a rule, however, the shrinkage is about five per cent. of the live weight. Expert pickers can dress from twenty to thirty birds in a day, depending, of course, upon whether they are hard or easy to pick.

The feathers should be spread in some clean, dry, airy place to cure. If placed upon the floor of a loft they should be turned over with a fork every few days until thoroughly dried. If put in bags and well steamed they are more valuable, as the steam in a measure purifies them and removes somewhat of the oily odor which they otherwise have. The feathers from a mature gosling will weigh about one-fourth to one-third of a pound, but green goslings, if quite young, do not yield as many feathers. The feathers from forty-five green geese, dressed August 29th, weighed twelve and three-quarter pounds after thorough steaming and drying. Where large numbers of green goslings are dressed, the feathers form no inconsiderable part of the income from fattening. The feathers alone form quite a source of profit, although their value is not as great as formerly.

Practically all the geese sold in Boston and New York markets are dry picked, but for some markets scalding is practiced. In that case the birds are dipped quickly into hot water, sometimes alternating the dipping with cold water, and the birds while moist with the hot water are wrapped tightly for a few moments in cloth. The operation must be carefully done,