

WHY IT DID NOT PAY?

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HOW is it that so few of the many people who engage in poultry keeping as a business make a success of it?

This is a question that has frequently been asked in the columns of the poultry press and has been put to the writer personally a number of times; the question has been partially answered by many eminent writers from time to time during the last few years, so the writer feels some little diffidence in resurrecting the subject, however there are annually some new additions to the army of enthusiasts who imagine they see wealth galore, a fine time and a realisation of their dreams, in poultry raising, so in view of these facts it may not be amiss to add a little to the fund of knowledge on this subject. It is not my intention to risk misleading our readers by indulging in theory, as I consider theory in poultry culture an exceedingly dangerous thing. I shall therefore confine myself to what practical experience has taught me and what I firmly believe to be facts.

One reason why many fail is because they have no practical knowledge of handling fowls in large numbers, they crowd a large number of birds into a small building, or the yard room provided is *insufficient* and *unsuitable*, I need both the adjectives to properly explain my meaning which I will do further on.

Another reason, failure to market their products at the season when highest prices rule.

Still another important reason, attempting to do too much with a small capital.

When we add to these reasons such drawbacks as the ravages of lice, rats, and disease, it is no wonder that the cause of failure lies entirely with the poultry keeper and not with the business. That poultry on a market basis can be made a remunerative occupation I am firmly convinced, this is my belief after fourteen years of experimenting in everything that relates to market poultry raising, both on a large and a small scale, and if I believed otherwise, I should now abandon it for ever and I think any other sane man would do likewise.

Among the many other causes of failure that might be added to those already mentioned, is the common one of starting a small business with fairly good equipment and then relying on it exclusively for a livelihood, when as a matter of fact it was quite apparent to an experienced ob-

server that such a small plant was not capable of furnishing more than half enough revenue to support the owner's family; it requires say six hundred dollars per annum to support the family, and the plant only nets three hundred dollars yearly, consequently the owner finds himself three hundred dollars behind at the end of the year; if by this time his capital is exhausted, which frequently happens to be the case, the "chicken ranch" is abandoned and we are told "there was no money in it," whereas in reality if the investment is compared with the returns, it will often prove to have yielded a high rate of interest for the capital involved, and the cause of failure was the *owner's inability to live on three hundred dollars* per annum, or his inability through lack of capital to start a sufficiently large plant to yield the necessary \$600 per annum. In this case the primary cause of failure was bad judgment, miscalculation, the natural results of incompetence and ignorance.

I have never yet seen a poultry farm started in Canada on a sufficiently large scale to yield a man a good living. Just here I wish it to be understood that I am considering commercial poultry raising, not the breeding of fancy stock for sale at fancy prices; I am aware there is one establishment of this sort in Ontario that is a success financially. A person who enters the poultry business should have his plans well laid before starting and then stick to them; he must be a "broiler raiser" or an "egg farmer," and if he intends to give his undivided attention to the business he had better be both.

Having cited some of the chief causes of failure I will not weary the reader by a recital in detail of the causes that produced the final result in those cases that have come under the writer's personal notice; suffice it to say that a bad beginning generally results in numerous small calamities that finally result in failure; it shall be the writer's object to make such suggestions and give such advice as will assist the beginner in starting properly.

If it is decided by the prospective poultryman that "egg production" shall be the chief source of revenue, and he intends to make it an exclusive business, he may safely count on (\$1.50) one dollar and fifty cents per annum as the amount of net profit that he may expect to realize from each laying hen, provided that he understands the business and is in every sense of the word a *practical* poultryman, if he is not he may find a *net loss* at the end of the year of \$1.50 per head instead of a profit. In the consideration of the subject I shall assume that the prospective poulterer is in all cases a properly qualified man, and my advice to all others is to leave it severely alone, and thus avoid loss and dis-