

MORTALITY AND DISEASE.

During the currency of the competition fifty-three, or 9 per cent. of the hens died. This included fourteen deaths from the heat wave of December last, when the maximum reached 111 degrees in the shade. It speaks well for the health of the stock from the breeders' yards when we are able to chronicle the fact that the whole of these deaths were from an ovarian nature, caused by excessive laying, with the exception of about four cases which were from hereditary complaints, viz., abscess of the anus. No contagious or infectious disease was discovered among the 600 hens throughout the whole trying season of extremes of cold, wet and heat.

THE FINANCIAL ASPECT.

The prices of foodstuffs were much lower than last year, and there was not so much fluctuation. The prices charged to us under contract, right throughout the currency of the competition, were 8½d. per bushel for bran, and 9½d. per bushel for pollard. Our average price for wheat was 3s. 4d., and for maize 2s. 6d. per bushel. The cost of feeding the 600 hens for the twelve months was as follows: Wheat, £47 1s.; maize, £12 17s. 10d.; pollard and bran, £44 2s. 1d.; meat, £20; green food, £7 10s.; shell grit, £2 10s.; total, £134 0s. 11d.

The monthly laying was: April, 2,383; May, 3,383; June, 4,900; July, 7,782; August, 10,423; September, 10,216; October, 10,829; November, 10,286; December, 9,409; January, 7,764; February, 7,236; March, 6,565. Grand total, 91,169 eggs, or 7,597 dozen.

The monthly range of prices for eggs was: April, 1s. 9d. to 2s. 1d.; May, 1s. 11d.; June, 1s. 10d. to 1s. 3d.; July, 1s. 4d. to 1½d.; August, 1½d. to 8d.; September, 8½d. to 7d.; October, 7d. to 7½d.; November, 8d. to 1½d.; December, 10d. to 1s.; January, 1s. to 1s. 3d.; February, 1s. 3d. to 1s. 4d.; March, 1s. 6d.

The market value of the eggs was £382 12s. 7d., from which deduct the cost of feed, £134 0s. 11d., and a profit of £248 11s. 8d. is left on the 600 hens. Every pen showed a profit on the cost of feeding, the pen returning the smallest value leaving a margin of 14s.

Supports Open-house Theory.

To the Editor "Farmer's Advocate":

In July 6th issue of the "Farmer's Advocate" I gave your readers some facts re my Barred Plymouth Rock hen under the heading of "Possibilities in Egg Production." Since that writing she has completed the year, and made the exceptionally fine record of 229 eggs in one year, averaging 6.8 eggs to the pound; market value, \$4.55. She laid extra well through the winter months, housed in a barn very drafty, and with scarcely any sun. Besides this, a large door was kept open all of nearly every day.

Now, this proves that Barred Rocks will do well in open quarters during cold weather, and her record (laying every month of the year) also proves that being kept in these quarters her constitutional vigor was maintained so that she was capable of doing good work after the warm weather came. I may say that all the hens kept with her laid well and have had very good health throughout. J. R. HENRY.
Wentworth Co., Ont.

Care of Laying Hens.

Very few people who raise poultry realize how great a difference the care of hens makes upon the egg yield. This has just been brought forcibly to my attention. I believe in moulting hens early, in order that they may have it over with before cold weather begins, for they lay much better in winter if the new coat of feathers is developed when the cold season sets in. To start them moulting well I let them run upon free range for three weeks without any feed except what they could pick up for themselves. A few hens on a large range would lay well under such conditions, but as our flock is large they could not find the necessary food, and I got only two or three eggs a day. My moulting programme is to turn them on the range without feed for a time and then feed liberally. I am on the feeding end of the programme now, and yesterday the number of eggs laid was nearly 50 per cent. of the number of hens, notwithstanding the fact that many are well into the moult. This is what a farmer who won in an egg-laying contest conducted by a number of farmers in the United States has to say about laying hens:

"I first tried the Black Langshans, and found them a splendid chicken for an all-purpose breed. Then I got Brown Leghorns, Buff Cochins, White Wyandottes, and the Barred and White Plymouth Rocks. I found them all good, but the White Wyandottes beat them all, to my notion. I got more eggs from them than from any of the other breeds under the same conditions, and also they are one of the best table fowls one can get."

It is amusing to read so many different opinions on different breeds, but let me say right here, it is more our fault that we don't get eggs in winter than the hens. Some people seem to

think that a hen ought to lay every day all winter, rustle her own food and roost anywhere at night, but I have never found the hen that would lay under such circumstances. Now, let me tell you how I make my hens lay. The first thing I do is to kill off all but the most thrifty and best young hens. I do this early in the fall; keep no hens over two years old. The next thing, I see that my poultry house is warm and well lighted. Then, the scratching pen must not be overlooked; it is one of the most necessary things to make hens lay in winter. The next thing is the feed. For breakfast I give them a hot bran mash, all the breadcrumbs from the table and vegetable peelings cooked and mixed together—about all they will eat. Then I throw shelled oats, wheat, barley, and most any and all kinds of small grain into the scratching pen among the litter, which consists of straw and leaves. Make them work for it—the harder the better. Then I pick up old bones and keep a supply crushed lying about the yard, so they can get it any time they want it. This is another necessary article. Then, at night I give them all the corn they will eat. A hen will not lay unless she is in good condition. I don't mean fat—just good, healthy condition. Then, if your hens don't lay in a reasonable time get another breed. I never keep the same cock more than one season. Get a new cock each spring by all means. One is enough for an ordinary barnyard flock of fifty or more. I only ask you to try it. I have better success than if I had a dozen cocks.

"As I said before, I like the White Wyandottes best, and after this will keep no other breed."

This comes, not from a theorist, but from a successful farmer. From our experience we can

but their laying qualities should come first. For example, suppose that two cocks are equal in points, except that one has one more serration in his comb than the standard calls for, while the other has the correct number. The one with the extra serration in his comb will be beaten by the other in the show room, but if he comes from a long line of prolific layers and the other does not, he is infinitely the better farmer's bird, and for ninety-nine out of a hundred observers he would present just as good an appearance. Of course, if you could have the highest scoring bird from the best line of layers that would be the thing, but to buy a bird in preference to another because he scores higher, without knowing anything about the laying qualities of his ancestry, is a mistake.

The following comes from Australia, where more attention is given to the utility than to the fancy:

"I breed Black Orpingtons, and rather pride myself on the combination of beauty and utility I have. The other day I was favored by a visit from a leading judge who summed my pen as follows: Cock, rather small (he weighs about 10 pounds), good type, two or three bad faults; hens, three very good, one fit to win in almost any, and two in good company. Fourth hen, fair; fifth, rather small; sixth, smallest of the lot, good shape certainly, but white in lobes and flights. He advised me to get rid of the two or three worst, get a first-class male for the best and I would breed something choice. I had already made up my mind to divide the pen, mating the best three, as he suggested, but I will keep the others too."

"Would you like to know why? That smallest hen, with white in lobes and flights, is the

best layer I ever owned. She laid right through last season with the others, and at no time were we getting eggs when she was not laying, except when she was broody, sitting or being broken up. She was the last bird to lay before the flock moulted this year and the first to commence again, and she laid over forty eggs before any of the others started. And this does not mean that the others are poor layers, for all but one have records of 200 or over their first year. The exception is the second best from a show point of view. I still have enough sentiment to stick to her, but expect some day she'll go. Again, this hen, small as she is, does not lay small eggs, but great big

eggs, but great big eggs' mouth water. I guess I'll mate up an exhibition pen this year, but I won't sell the little hen with white in lobes and ears."

This is the kind of breeder for a practical farmer to get stock from. You notice that he is watching the laying qualities of even his show birds, while a great many fanciers prefer a hen with good points that lays only a few eggs, as they are of the opinion that those few will be surer to hatch and produce finer chicks than if she laid many. We couldn't get along without the fancy, but we want eggs with it.

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Prizewinning Cotswolds.

First-prize ewe lamb and first-prize ewe, Toronto and Ottawa, 1905. Property of E. F. Park, Burgessville, Ont.

endorse what he says. The statement that one cock is enough for a barnyard will astonish a great many. We mated from eight to twelve females with one cock in a pen, never more than twelve, but when they run on free range it is altogether another matter. We mated one cock with thirty-eight hens last season on free range, and out of the last thirteen eggs that were set from these hens twelve chicks were hatched and the other egg contained a chick which died in the shell. However, when we range a larger number of hens we use two cocks, keeping one in a cock pen and the other with the hens, changing them every night at roosting time, so that they take turns on the range. When there is more than one cock on the same range they invariably interfere with each other. There are cocks that will not fertilize the eggs of all the hens in a barnyard, but if the first setting or two of eggs proves that he is not doing so, one should put him in the pot and get one that will, instead of getting two or three like him, for if a cock is not prolific his pullets will not be, and will lay but few eggs. One would improve his flock much faster by putting all his money into one good cock than by spending the same amount for three inferior ones.

We believe that the average farmer makes a mistake in the purchase of his breeding stock by following the fads blindly. If he has time for it, or if his wife is so inclined and has the time to breed poultry so that the lines of breeding can be kept distinct by knowing which chicks come from each hen, etc., it is well to go in for show stock, in which case the score of a bird is the principal thing when selecting a breeder, but if one is not going to enter his birds at the shows he should still be interested in their points,