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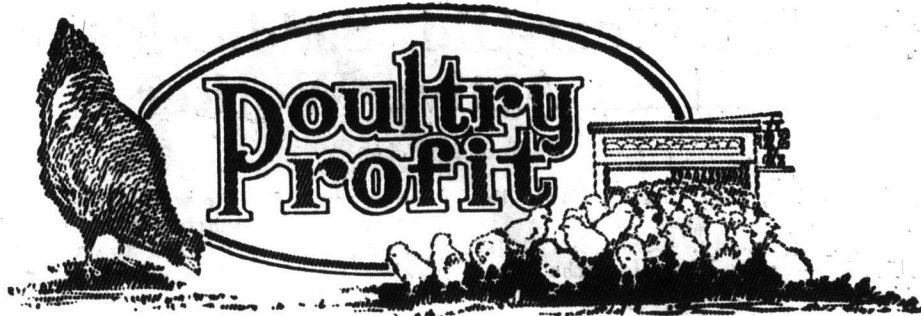
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By Helen E. Vialoux

The Dominion wide egg-laying contest which has been of such interest to thousands ended on November 1st. We Manitobans feel proud indeed to learn that a pen of Winnipeg birds, 10 Anconas, owned by Wm. Howe, are the winners of the Dominion contest. The second and third place also came to Manitoba birds. Second pen, White Wyandottes, owned by Thos. Lund, Stonewall, and third, W. H. Semmington, Brandon, Man.

Howe's birds laid 2041 eggs in the year, making an average of over 200 eggs per hen. The curious thing about this contest is that Ottawa and Montreal calmly ignore the Western report of the contest, though the figures are official. The Montreal papers report, "Dominion-wide egg laying contest won by Vale Poultry Farm of Montreal, at Ottawa, White Leghorns, with a record of 1729 eggs." Three hundred eggs less than Howe's Anconas, but, no doubt, later on the East will waken up and find out the Dominion contest had a Western tail to it, and the champions belong to Manitoba, where zero weather prevails for the winter months.

The contest for 1920-21 commences on November 11th at Brandon, Ottawa and at least three other points in the East, including St. John, N.B.

Really the best individual egg layers in the contest at Ottawa were Rhoades Barred Rocks of Ottawa, and until recently they were in the lead, but, alas, no less than four of the best layers out of the pen of ten birds died before the end of the year, which was hard luck indeed, as the directors ruled out the substitutes provided, and Rhoades' pen only took the third place in the experimental farm contest.

The egg-laying contest at Storrs, Connecticut, U.S.A., ended on October 29th, and it is interesting to compare the result of the first contest in 1912, when five birds laid 1071 eggs, with the 1920 record of 2234 eggs, ten birds in the pen, showing that there has been little change in egg records for the past nine years. White Leghorns won the contest for the three first years, then the White Wyandottes had their innings for a couple of years, and since then the Barred Rocks have been the champions. Jules F. Francois, of New York, winning for two years in succession with his wonderful pen, averaging 220 eggs per head. One thousand hens were entered in this contest, thirteen states of the Union were represented and three Canadian provinces. They laid a grand total of 161,455 eggs in the year, an average of 161.5 for all. Individual records were wonderful in some cases. A Barred Rock hen laying 103 eggs in 104 days. Two Rock hens tied for highest individual honors for the year, with 281 eggs to their credit. A Wyandotte hen from British Columbia, honored her country by laying 267 eggs, the champion of the Wyandotte division. The best Rhode Island Red hen laid 269 eggs. Yet Professor W. R. Graham, of Guelph, tells us our average Canadian hen only produces about 84 eggs each year. He rightly contends that we not only need more hens but also better hens in Canada if we are to build up a great poultry industry of national importance. Professor Graham suggests the schools as the best medium, educate the children to raise good poultry and to be able to select a good bird, to learn how to cull a flock for best layers and breeders, then we shall see better flocks of fowl in the farming districts at any rate. This work is already in the hands of the Boys' and Girls' Clubs of Manitoba, where 27,000 members are learning a great deal about poultry and stock. The club movement is only in its infancy in Ontario and Quebec, doubtless it will grow by leaps and bounds in the future.

There is a splendid prospect for "Successful poultry raising with profit." The

Western Home Monthly slogan, for some years, at least. Mill feed and grains are being materially reduced in price, and the number of fowl kept in Canada has decreased owing, of course, to the outrageous prices demanded for all chicken feed the last two years. There certainly has been profiteering in feed grains and every sort of mash, bran or otherwise. More backyard fowl are kept, but in the suburbs and on the farms throughout Canada the flocks have been reduced. Fresh killed poultry and new laid eggs are very high, and scarce as a consequence. Canada has now an excellent market and a good reputation for her eggs in the Old Land. The future of the poultry industry is bright indeed if handled in the right way.

The use of electric light as an aid to winter egg production has become general in Canada and the States. The light should be switched on about 5 a.m., and when days are very short at 4 p.m. keeping it on until 10 p.m. Hens in common with every other creature in nature need a rest for some hours at least. Over-forcing is a poor practice, resulting in general debility after a time. The use of mash, dry or wet, in proper proportions helps to induce heavy laying. Many good laying mashers are on the market but they are priced too high. Bran and shorts one-third, crushed oats one-third, mixed with some beef scrap at home, costs less and does the same work.

Christmas is drawing near, fowls of all varieties are fattening for the feast. Dry plucking is the scientific method of dressing birds, without doubt, but for home consumption fowls may be scalded and plucked in a twinkling, and present a very good appearance if the work is done in an expert manner. The fowl should be killed with a sharp pointed knife run into the roof of the mouth. A large kettle of hot water just below boiling point should be in readiness and the bird quickly plunged into it for a few seconds, when the feathers give at a touch, dip the steaming carcass into cold water for a couple of seconds, pluck legs, wings and neck. At first remove pin feathers with a little knife then drop into ice water to plump and whiten, when cool enough place on a shaping board of plank. If the fowls are to be packed for some weeks, leave them on the shaping board until the next day, then place in a packing box with clean snow between the layers. This method of cold storage keeps the birds more juicy than if frozen in the ordinary way. Keep them in a low temperature, of course.

Turkeys are always dry plucked, are dressed easily if the large tail and wing feathers are removed as the bird makes his last struggle. Ducks and geese are woolly things, somewhat hard to make presentable. Some people steam them, but I prefer the dry plucking, and the pin feathering is no joke on a large bird. In conclusion I wish all the readers of The Western Home Monthly a Merry Christmas with a fat turkey, goose or fowl to grace the festive board. May we live up to the Golden Rule in 1921 in all of our dealings, and thus become a happy, united people.

MARKET LETTER

Wheat.—In reviewing the wheat situation conditions in other commodities must be taken into consideration, for the reason that decline in other commodities is creating the main bear sentiment, which has resulted in the severe decline of wheat prices during the past week. As the news continues that liquidation of other lines of merchandise is continuing, the assumption would be that wheat prices might possibly go lower. However, opinions are divided, and during the week following opinions



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