

FEEDING THE FATTENING STOCK

A roaster of the highest quality is one which is young, full grown, plump and well finished. Such a one will roast better than one that has more bones than flesh. A chicken is "ripe" as a choica roaster for only a short time. After a pullet has commenced to lay eggs, her flesh is not of the same quality as it was before she laid an egg. When the spurs of a cockerel begin to harden the flesh begins to get tougher. A good roaster must always be plump and fat; that is, it must be well finished where the fat and lean meat are well intermixed in good proportions. A well finished and good appearing chicken will look well on the table, while the unfinished chicken lacks flavor, and when prepared for eating may present anything but an appetizing appearance.

The majority of farmers in Quebec take but little trouble in properly preparing their poultry for market. The consumers, or the general public, are so accustomed to purchasing dressed poultry of poor quality that they usually do not recognize the difference between a poor roaster and a well finished one. If the poultry is well fattened, properly killed and dressed, there are few kinds of meat so wholesome and with so much flavor.

A thin bird is not attractive when dressed and is not appetizing when roasted. The flesh appears shrunken and the bones are prominent. When roasted, the meat is dry and tough.

A plump, well finished chicken has a rich flavor and an abundance of tender meat of good quality.

The fattening of poultry, then, is a finishing process. The object in fattening is to prepare in the best possible way poultry flesh for human consumption.

There is always a demand for dressed poultry. Poorly fattened birds, however, bring low prices, and sometimes no profits are made in selling them. Plump birds are in the greatest demand at highest prices, and birds of high quality always yield the largest profits. Fattening, then, means heavier birds and higher prices. There is usually five cents or more a pound difference in price between thin and plump poultry.

Best results are obtained by feeding all fattening birds on soft mash. The gain in weight is greater and the quality of the flesh is superior when wet mash is used than when the chickens are fed whole grain. The ground grains used to make up the mash are usually oatmeal feed, finely ground buckwheat and cornmeal. Low grade flour and middlings may also be used.

A good fattening ration is composed of equal parts oatmeal feed, finely ground buckwheat and cornmeal. The proportion of oatmeal feed may be increased, for it is one of the best fattening foods we have. It is a by-product of the oatmeal factory and is much cheaper than oatmeal itself. The actual price of each grain will determine its value as a fattening