The ordinary plan is to soak the grain—most people use oats—twenty-four hours previous to sowing. The ordinary greenhouse flat is useful for this purpose. Any box from 3 to 4 inches deep will answer. It is necessary that the bottom of the box should have sufficient holes to give good drainage. Place a little damp earth over the bottom of the box, and then put in about ½-inch of soaked grain, and cover this with about 1 inch of sand. Keep the box in a warm place, and keep the earth moist. In a few days the grain will begin to germinate. Most feeders allow the grain to grow two or three inches before feeding.

INCUBATION.

This is a very interesting topic. Here we are dealing with the renewal of the flock. This has been to the large grower a difficult problem, and to most farmers and small growers comparatively easy. (It is apparently easy for the farmer to hatch and rear 100 or more chicks, and very difficult to get hens to lay during the winter. The large grower can usually get a fair egg production during the winter, if he can get the chicks out and well grown.) There are so many factors that may influence the hatch and the vitality of the chicks, that it is at times an impossibility to say why one fails and another succeeds.

The first essential to successful incubation is good hatchable eggs. The hatching power of eggs is apparently influenced by the parent stock, not only in the present generation, but possibly for generations back. Granting this, we must then use only the strongest and best birds as breeders, and if a rigid culling is followed annually, it is our belief that gradually, but surely, the problem will become less difficult. Then, again, the methods of housing and feeding are factors. Birds kept in ill-ventilated, damp houses, or under any unsanitary conditions, are lowered in vitality or vigor, which of necessity must be more or less imparted to the germ of the egg. It has been shown under the discussion of foods that the hatch is influenced by the feeds.

The farmer's flock is usually strong and rugged; it has plenty of exercise in the fresh air, and, moreover, is seldom kept in such numbers that the ground about the buildings becomes seriously contaminated. There are, of course, some exceptions to the above statement. Fowls upon the farm are very seldom excessively fed upon meat, or what may be termed forcing foods. Then, again, the unlimited range and the great variety of foods available make the conditions upon the farm excellent for the production of good hatchable eggs. If more attention was paid to the selection of the males, the results would be improved. The selling of the largest, and earliest maturing males, and the breeding of the late hatched, immature, ill-nourished males is not conducive to progress, to say the least.