



The Grain the Pullet Eats

"HOW much grain does a laying hen eat in its pullet year?" enquires a Dundas county woman. "We keep no track of the grain consumed by our broody Plymouth Rocks. We just go to the granary or feed bags and help ourselves. Grain is so high in price this year that my husband is objecting. He says there is no money in it and he wants the flock reduced or done away with. We in the house have a special interest in the poultry, as the egg money is ours. Now, how can we figure out their cost?"

In his bulletin on "Farm Poultry," Prof. Graham, at Guelph, states that birds of the American breeds such as Barred Rocks, Wyandottes, etc., will eat 80 to 90 lbs. of grain, including the grain in the dry mash, during their pullet year. Leghorns and other light breeds will consume 16 to 20 per cent. less. Grain this year will probably average about three cents a pound; oats and meal a little less and wheat and corn a little more. The cost of feeding the birds for a year would be therefore about \$2.40. If this Dundas woman's pullets lay a good proportion of eggs this winter, as they should, the average price for the year should be at least 40 cents a dozen. Suppose her flock averaged 10 dozen eggs each. This would be a low yield for a good commercial flock, but probably high for an average farm flock. Ten dozen eggs are worth four dollars. At low 40 cts. for labor, 20 cts. for green feed, charcoal, oyster shell and occasional deaths and we have net profit of one dollar per fowl.

This is a conservative estimate and if the birds are well cared for, more than one dollar should be easily realized. The selling value of the fowl next fall will more than pay for the cost of rearing them up to the laying age. At least this is our opinion. Farm and Dairy readers who have kept accounts with farm sized flocks, may be able to give fuller information to our Dundas county friend.

Poultry Ideas

IF a post-mortem examination of a heavy hen, that died suddenly, will show considerable fat deposited between the muscular fibres, it is proof that overfat was the cause of death. Often many of these fibres themselves are replaced by fat, which makes them weak in action and easily ruptured, and those around the egg passage become weak and fishy. If through fright extra strain is brought upon these muscles, the passage is readily torn, and the contents pass into the abdominal cavity, followed by peritonitis and death.

Egg-eating is a vice acquired by fowls when a tempting broken egg lies before them. To prevent the trouble it is necessary to keep a watch of the condition of the hens. When hens are too fat—and also when there is an insufficient amount of time in their food, they are apt to lay soft-shelled eggs. It is seldom that hens in a proper condition lay eggs other than strongly-shelled ones. Hens are often tempted to eat eggs by having shells still wet with the albumen thrown to them. The best way to feed egg shells to fowls is to first heat the shells in the stove oven for about an hour, and then crumble and mix with the soft food.

There is not much profit in fussing with sick fowls. If the early symptoms of disease are promptly

treated there need be no fear of contagion. The flocks should be continually watched so that their condition may be daily noted. Trying to cure roup, or some other contagious disease, is a good way to endanger the lives of all the fowls. It is not always possible to keep the stock entirely free from sickness, but by early work one is enabled to ward off two-thirds of the ailments that it seems poultry are heir to.

The liver of a healthy fowl is of a uniform chocolate-red color, firm, and the right lobe larger than the left. Anything else indicates some disease. Whenever a fowl is killed for table use its liver should be carefully inspected. If greyish or yellowish masses or tubercles are formed in the liver, it is unfit for food, as the deposits are a strong proof that the bird is suffering from tuberculosis.

Fowls having brown or dark brown eggs as a rule have yellow skin and orange-yellow legs, while those laying light colored eggs have whitish skin and light (lemon) colored legs. By selecting the dark eggs to hatch from and breeding from the yellow-skinned and yellow-legged birds, the quality of the dressed poultry will be greatly improved.

The writer one year made a test, for profit, between one good family cow and 50 hens, to see which would yield the most profit. The result was, the cow's milk was worth, at market rates, \$14.10, and the poultry account (which was mainly for eggs sold) equalled \$160.81. It cost \$52 to feed the cow one year, and \$50 for the hens. The value of the manure of both was about equal. But the biggest item in favor of the hens was in point of labor, it requiring double the amount to attend to the cow that it did to the hens.

Leg weakness in ducks is usually caused by dampness. If the duck is compelled to sleep in a damp house, she is likely to be attacked with rheumatism or cramps, for which there is no sure remedy. Overfeeding will also do it. Sometimes ducks break down by persistent attention of heavy drakes.

Of all the French breeds, the Houdan seems to be the best for our changeable climate. They lay in France in every particular except for table use, in which capacity they are classed second to only one variety—the Greve Coeur—but the latter breed does not thrive well with us. The Houdans are large, heavy, short-legged fowls, with small, light bone, a remarkable absence of oval. They are of the highest order as table fowls.

There is no room in the poultry world for duds nor dandies. One day a gentleman, dressed in the latest style, with a high hat and wearing kid gloves, dropped in to talk poultry with the writer. The first impression was that our visitor was a man of means, or a business man with a country estate, and wasted no time in getting to the point. But, instead, he explained that he had a few hundred dollars in cash, and he wanted to invest it in the poultry business. He made it plain that he believed the work to be next to nothing, and that he had carefully figured out how it was possible to realize an income of several thousand dollars a year. But we put a damper on his ardor. We explained that high hats and kid gloves were not the proper paraphernalia for poultrymen—that a man afraid of work would never be successful—that raising hard work was connected with the business—that there were a whole lot of stumbling blocks—and so on we enumerated, until, in despair, he gave up the idea. Oh, these airy theories; these false dreams. No wonder the failures.—M. K. B.

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