

POULTRY.

Danger of Overstocking.

The almost phenomenally high prices of eggs this past winter may lead a great many into trying an expensive experiment this year by their overstocking in hens. Some people imagine that because they have had twenty hens this winter, they may keep a hundred hens next winter in the same quarters, with proportionate profit. There are those who have tried this, only to harvest more disappointment and loss than eggs. The hen looks to be a very easily-managed creature, having few and simple wants that are easily supplied. The truth is that she has a very highly-developed organization, and that she demands careful and constant attention if she is to yield her owner a profitable return. Her quarters must be ample, free from dampness, and well lighted. Indeed, the average farmer has no idea of how needful is strict cleanliness in his poultry house. Fewer still realize that if they reduced the number in their flocks by fifty per cent. that they would have higher profits than they now enjoy. If, then, the farmer would increase his egg yield next winter, he must provide ample shelter for his flock. Further, he will be making a costly mistake if he imagines that chickens do not require care during the summer. For this attention, too, he must make provision, or next September will see him shorn of his profits. Poultry-raising is coming to be a business by itself. It must be studied, and its practice learned under those who have already made a success of it. It is a work equally exacting with that of the management of a dairy herd, and anyone who is not willing to make the sacrifice that the dairyman makes need not look for profits in the poultry business.

A second danger is that many village and city people may think that they see in the poultry business a short-cut to wealth, and so engage in this work, not counting the cost. Unfortunately, the country is flooded with literature that misleads not a few of the unwary. Much of this literature impresses one as being prepared by writers of lively imagination, who have an easy way of not being governed by facts. Nearly every community has its quota of those who have read such literature, and whose whole labor has resulted in vanity and vexation of spirit. The man or woman who wishes to engage in poultry-raising will do well to remember (1) that intensive poultry-raising is rarely a remunerative success; (2) that the business has to be learned as any other business is learned, and that it takes time, study and close personal application in contact with the work itself; (3) that the only way is to begin on a relatively small scale, and to expand one's business as his power of control increases. All of which means that, while an occasional amateur may leap into success, that his good-fortune is his because of happy chance, rather than because of his good management. The average man or woman who now has a good job, and a little spare capital will do well to stop and carefully count the cost before he throws away his living or invests his capital in an enterprise the workings of which he has yet to learn.

J. K. York Co., Ont.

Intensive Poultry Husbandry in Belgium

ENGLISH CORRESPONDENCE.

Belgium, though thickly populated, is one of the self-supporting countries of Europe in respect of eggs and poultry. The conditions are much the same as in Britain, but we import about £8,000,000 worth of eggs and poultry annually. Why this should be the case, has been the subject of an investigation by the Poultry Organization Society, and some valuable data are published in a recent report. One reason for the large production of poultry in Belgium is the division of the land into numerous small farms. Out of 829,000 holdings, 65 per cent. are less than 2½ acres in extent. In Britain, only a small percentage of the land is in small holdings.

Belgium has spent public money wisely in finding out the class of poultry most suited to various districts, and also the branch of poultry-keeping capable of giving the best returns. Egg production has been found best on the richest lands. The poorer lands are more suitable for raising chickens for table purposes. A feature of Belgian poultry-keeping is the free use of buttermilk for fattening purposes.

The uniformity of produce through keeping a single breed of poultry in large areas of similar conditions has manifest advantages over a mixture of races. The Belgians find that the most prolific layers of eggs are the fowls small in size of body, and their best-laying hens weigh four pounds or less.

There is no central educational poultry farm or experiment station in England, since the abandonment of the Theale Poultry Farm, and a strong committee has been formed to establish a national poultry institute and experiment station. A draft

scheme has been submitted to the Board of Agriculture, and provisionally approved, and if donations and annual subscriptions are forthcoming on a sufficient scale, the Board will take an active interest in the work. It will also recommend grants from the Development Fund. Wales now is having the benefit of travelling poultry-instruction trains, with competent lecturers and equipment, on the lines so familiar to farmers in the American and Canadian West.

F. DEWHIRST.

GARDEN & ORCHARD.

Successful Orcharding.

In the May 19th issue of "The Farmer's Advocate" appeared an illustration of apple trees in bloom, showing part of the orchard of W. H. Gibson, Durham Co., Ont. Mr. Gibson writes us regarding his way of managing his 70-acre orchard, with some particulars as to yields and prices. On thirty acres of this orchard the trees are not bearing, being planted only from two to seven years, but the remaining forty acres, which were planted from 1891 to 1896, are producing apples, though not in full bearing yet. His crop of apples in 1909 amounted to 2,300 barrels, and sold, net, f. o. b., at \$2.25 per barrel. In 1908 he had 1,800 barrels, and received \$3.25 per barrel, net. These fine returns appear to have been partly due to the fruit being handled by a co-operative fruit-growers' association.

CARE OF ORCHARD.

In regard to his treatment of his orchard, Mr. Gibson writes:

While the trees are young, I keep the ground cultivated, growing hoed crop, such as small fruits, corn or roots, between the rows, and applying barnyard manure in abundance. If impracticable to hoe so much, then I leave a 10-foot strip for each row of young trees, which is plowed in early spring, cultivated with a light cultivator until July, and then a cover crop is sown, to be plowed under the following spring. I avoid growing grain or hay near the young trees.

As soon as the orchard comes into bearing, I am adopting a three-year-rotation, as follows: First year, plow lightly in spring, harrow, roll, and disk, to get a fine seed-bed; then, before June 1st seed with clover, using 12 to 15 pounds per acre, and no nurse crop. Clip weeds with mower in July, and by autumn will have a nice stand of clover. Second year, watch the clover grow, and when in blossom, mow, and leave in orchard as a mulch. If thought advisable, a portion could be raked from center of space and placed under the trees. Third year, plow sod as early in spring as practicable; harrow, disk and cultivate until last of June, then sow a cover crop. Buckwheat would do, but vetches are better, as they gather nitrogen.

This completes the rotation, and the land can be plowed and sown with clover again the following spring. The above system will keep the soil rich in nitrogen, and the decaying clover and sod will free potash in the soil. Would also add some barnyard manure occasionally, and, if necessary, lime and muriate of potash.

VARIETIES.

The varieties are chiefly Ben Davis, Stark, Baldwin, Golden Russet, and Spy, and so far have proved profitable in the order named, as Spies, top-grafted on Talman Sweets planted 17 years ago, have grown well, but are only now commencing to bear a few apples. Ben Davis trees, however, the same age, have produced annual crops of 2½ to 4 barrels per tree for the past ten years. Starks, Golden Russets and Baldwins are yielding about 4 barrels per tree each alternate year. There are also some Ontarios, Peewaukees and Manns, which are not desirable kinds, and a few acres of Duchess, Wealthy, Blenheim and Cranberry, which give good returns."

Mr. Gibson does not confine his attention to apples, but has also a few acres of cherries and pears. He has exported successfully Bartlett and Clapp pears in cold storage, and Clairegeau and Anjou in ordinary storage.

He reports that for five miles back from Lake Ontario, between Newcastle and Bowmanville, almost every farmer is planting out apple orchard, in size varying from 10 to 80 acres. Small wonder is it that such should be the case, when instances of conspicuous success in the business, such as Mr. Gibson's, is before their eyes.

Some Good Old Apples.—III.

Speaking of the Snow apple to one of our foremost apple-growers, the other day, he agreed with me that the lime-sulphur spray would control the scab, and that the arsenate of lead would destroy the larva of the codling moth, and that it really would pay, under these circumstances, to set an orchard of this fancy dessert apple. "But," said he, "why not McIntosh Red?" The writer contended that the Snow was really a more suitable size for a table apple, of more delicious flavor, rather more productive in tree, and holds its fruit better, especially in the southern parts of our Province.

5. The Greening, which, being the chief variety so-called, needs no other name to distinguish it from the Northwest or any other Greening, is one of our old-time favorites which the lime-sulphur spray now promises to restore to its former high place as a first-class commercial variety. Only last year a neighbor doomed to destruction a fine orchard of this apple, on account of scab and pink rot. They were grand trees, about 40 years planted, and in the fall of 1908 were laden to the ground with fruit. They were harvested, and set inside the fruit-house to await a convenient time for packing and shipping, but, in the meantime, the fungus had spread in the barrels, and had eaten into the flesh, so that, instead of the carload of Greenings for sale, he had a carload of rubbish to dump into the lake. No wonder that the following spring those trees came out, root and branch, and were replaced with peach trees.

Now, this apple, though tender in very cold sections, grows to its greatest perfection in the old Niagara District, and in all the apple districts of the southern portions of our Province. With plenty of sunshine, its usually green cheek is often tinted with a pretty red. Its quality for cooking is not excelled, and the tree is the most productive of all varieties. Thomas speaks of single trees in the State of New York yielding



Friends of the Chickies.