

POULTRY DEPT.

Conducted by S. Short, Ottawa

It is most beneficial for fowls, especially those that have been kept in confined quarters all summer, to have the run of the garden and lawn now that garden work is practically over. All late vegetables, such as celery, cabbage, and the various root crops, should now be harvested and the fowls allowed to scratch without restriction. Should there be a likelihood of the tulips or other bulbs recently planted being disturbed by the fowls, have a load of fresh manure dumped in the garden at a convenient distance from the forbidden ground and that will usually absorb the attention of the industrious hen. Provision should now be made to supply the flock with green food during the winter. Cabbage, mangels, beets, turnips, small potatoes or unmarketable apples are all excellent and can be obtained more easily and cheaper now than later in the season.

In the October issue, it was recommended that an early and severe weeding out of the flock should now take place if winter eggs were to be obtained. With the removal of all old hens and late chickens should be included the very fat hens, no matter what age they may be. Very little handling will soon indicate these birds and hens that are very fat now will remain so and, in fact, are likely to increase in that respect when they are confined in more or less cramped winter pens. Fat hens are usually lazy and greedy. They are, as a rule poor winter layers. They lay in spring and early summer, but lay

much below the average during the season. Their eggs usually will not hatch. In most cases, the eggs have very thin shells and are sometimes broken by the other hens that lay in the same nest. Fat hens frequently drop their eggs during the night on the roost boards and the egg is broken and eaten by the hens. The egg-eating habit is thus formed. Weed them out.

Properly-prepared fat hens make an excellent dish, either steamed until tender and then browned over in a hot oven, or stewed and made into a pot pie. On a cold November day, neither of these dishes is to be despised.

A common trouble among fowls at all seasons is indigestion or crop-binding. If taken before the bird is too weak, this may easily be cured. The first symptom is the refusal of the bird to eat. If this should be noticed early in the morning, the fowl should be caught and if the crop is hard and distended, indigestion is the trouble. The patient should be given water at once. This is done by holding the bird under your left arm, holding open the bill with the left hand and pouring down the water from a spoon with the right. After giving about a third of an ordinary teacup of water, knead the crop until it is soft and pen up the bird where it cannot get food till given water. Repeat the treatment for two days, morning and evening, and if after that period the crop has not become empty, a surgical operation is necessary. This is done by cutting a slit about an inch long in the crop, a little to the right of the feather line on the left hand side. Remove the contents of the crop, wash it out with warm water and then sew up with white thread, first the inner skin of the crop and then the outer skin of the breast. Put the bird in a warm place and the first day give a light meal of soft

food and, should the bird on the second day, show normal condition, let it run with the others. In summer time, this operation is rarely unsuccessful. In winter, 50 per cent. succumb but they would have died in any event and many a fine bird has been saved by the foregoing treatment.

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