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THE GRAIN GROWERS' GUIDE
Winnipeg, Man.

WEEDING OUT THE FLOCK

Amongst poultry-breeders of late years
fowls in their poultry-yard which reach
the age of two years. This weeding-
out process takes place according to
the time the pullets are able to take
the place of two-year-old hens. If the
egg basket is to be increased, all birds
in their third year must be dispensed
with, excepting such hens as have shown
special merit as layers, and these are
only needed for reproduction. None
but promising pullets should be kept
—that is, birds which from their spright-
ly appearance, build and comb, give
promise to be good layers. Then, for
show purposes, the selected birds, must
have white skins, and carry plenty
of breast meat, with the least amount
of offal and bone. Much might be
said against discarding as useless the
two-year-old hens; their eggs are larger
and heavier, the chickens strong and
healthy, and are raised at a minimum
of cost and labor. Altho the cost of
feeding an increased stock may have
to be considered, and the vigor of the
chickens raised. Besides, a hen that
averages 150 eggs the first year, and
100 the second, in addition to raising
two or three broods of chickens, may well
be said to have earned her own worth,
and been a lucrative source of income
to her owner. As it is, however, under
ordinary conditions, adult birds do not
require so much food as younger grow-
ing stock, and if given their liberty will
forage for their own keep, and for their
offspring.

Only the Best Strains

On many farms where from 50 to 100
birds are kept all the year round for
various purposes, they receive no more
attention than one ration of grain in
the morning and are left to find their
own living for the rest of the day. Under
such haphazard conditions disease
is unknown in the farmer's poultry-
yard, nor do losses often occur, except
by sudden and violent depredations of
rats or cats. Therefore, it may be held
with justice that if only the best strains
are kept in any poultry yard, these
hens may be kept, even to the third
year, and if mated with vigorous, young,
pure-bred cockerels, results will be equally
satisfactory. Exhibition birds noted for
show or utility purposes are not in-
frequently known to breed true up till
the fourth year, and their stock show
strength, vigor, and immunity from
disease. But this applies only to stock
carefully selected from the best strains
of breeds noted for their laying qualities
or table properties, and kept for stock-
raising either as pure-breeds or profitable
first crosses. Then again, a good deal
rests on results when the birds are "ac-
climatized." Birds raised on the same
premises for several years become, as
it were, accustomed to their surround-
ings, which vary considerably in soil
and temperature, according to climate
and district. The introduction of new
blood in such cases has been found to
strengthen good and vigorous qualities
already gained. How interesting and
advantageous it would be if a breeder
of poultry should know right off what
fowls are best suited to his own particu-
lar district and climate, in regard to their
laying and other properties!

Adaption to surroundings goes a
long way in poultry-rearing (says a
writer in the "Scottish Farmer"), and
it would save no end of time, labor and
even expense to their owners, in their
choice of breeds, were the breeds best
adapted to certain known surroundings
so far reliably ascertained and fixed.
The various properties of certain breeds
of fowls necessarily differ under certain
conditions, and from unacquaintance
with these cases the disappointment that
too often accrues to the owner in discover-
ing his mistake in the choice of breed he
has made. The road to successful poultry
farming is not reached by leaps and
bounds, but by patient observation, and
practice, and by following Nature's lines
as closely as possible, by skill, knowledge,
wisdom, and patience, the art is brought
to perfection.

From these remarks, one can gather
how important the two-year-old fowl may
be, and after she has won honors in
supplying the table with eggs and chickens
beyond the two year limit, she may be
made profitable when fattened for the
home larder or the wholesale poulterer.

Buy Good Cockerels

Something must be said in regard to
Continued on Page 14

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