

Poultry.

Feeding Chickens for Market.

Now-a-days it is the custom among many breeders of table fowls to finish them off with a fortnight's close feeding, which is calculated to increase their weight considerably and give them a flavor which is at the same time rich and palatable. This is done in different ways. Some raise a lot of birds together, picking them up from their runs once a week and shutting them in a house together where they are crammed with prepared food, which generally consists of ground oats and suet or fat of even a cheaper kind. The birds manage to digest this soft food very well without exercise, put on flesh rapidly if in good health, and are soon ready, the period being ascertained by the feeder by handling, when they are at once killed. Some birds will not fatten, as it is called, although chickens do not really put on much fat at any time, but rather flesh, while if they are kept too long, or their food or drink be allowed to get sour, they sometimes go the other way. There are some men in England who are fatteners or finishers by trade, buying up hundreds of young birds from the cottagers and farmers, feeding them at home in the way described, and then killing and plucking them and sending to market. Some of these people do a tremendous trade, especially at those seasons of the year when prices rule high. They have the usual advantages enjoyed by middlemen; thus they always know the prices they are likely to obtain for their goods. The salesmen depend upon them, or always endeavor to suit them, because they are compelled to work together with men who really stand in a position as customers to them or one which is at least as important. This being the case, the fatterer, whose business is large and money always ready, is depended upon, to a great extent, by the little people in his district, who really breed for him, and are in reality compelled to receive his price. Thus he actually has a good margin which secures him from loss and enables him to do very well indeed. It is safe to say that as a general rule the breeders seldom get the benefit of high figures or anything more than a sensible advance when London prices are very high indeed.

Not very long ago we were at a farm where many hundreds of birds were bred each year and a system used which differs some from the above. At about 16 weeks the chickens were taken up and put in rows in little compartments, the floors of which were composed of a few slates of wood so that the manure could fall through into the drawer beneath, which was sawdusted. In front of each little cage was a trough of wood into which the soft food was placed, and this was composed of milk and meal boiled or fine greaves and meal also cooked. It was given in a thin, sloppy state in order to prevent the necessity of giving water as well, but the birds did well, although some difficulty was experienced in keeping the troughs absolutely sweet. Here some two or three hundred were caged and fed at once, and their places filled up as fast as they were taken out for market.

In France another system is adopted in some places where chickens are fattened by a machine, the invention, we believe, of M. Odele Martin. A nozzle is put into the bird's mouth, and, with a slight pressure of the foot, a quantity of soft prepared food is forced into the crop. This is, of course, regulated by the length of pressure and the state and size of the bird. Each bird is placed in a similar cage to one of those above named, but it stands on a perch to which its feet are fastened by a strap and more room is given to admit of its body being grasped by the feeder. In one large machine, however, which the maker has invented, the tiers of cages are placed in a circular form and revolve, the man taking up a position and simply pushing the cages past him as he proceeds. The food used in France is generally buckwheat meal and milk, which is very much relished, and is believed to be as good as any food which is known. We certainly believe it to be equal to ground oats, although they are about the best food for the purpose, and they are ground up husk and all. Oats are cheap enough, and so is buckwheat. It seems strange to us, and yet it is true, that while breeders neglect such grand foods as the above they will give 50 per cent. more money for compounds which are not one-half their value; but the public like being gulled, and it would perhaps be easier to sell ground oats a little spiced at \$5 than at the usual price. Another good food is maize meal mixed with fine sharps—to give the nitrogen which the maize is deficient in. This is used very largely in

the North of England and is very much appreciated. If a man would succeed with his poultry he must use good food and that fresh. Stale meal is dear because many of its properties have departed; hence meal should be always fresh ground—another example of the value of a mill at home. —[Mark Lane Express.

Poultry Topics.

Though the question of how to dispose of the surplus stock before cold weather sets in, is one of importance to the breeder at this time, there are other things to consider.

REPAIRING THE HOUSES.

or building new ones, should not be put off beyond this month. Glass is broken, shingles off the roof, and things are not ready yet around the poultry house for cold weather. Lose no time in putting everything in trim, neat, comfortable condition, and you will not be caught napping by a sudden cold storm, or be obliged to apologise for the dilapidated appearance of things when a fancier friend pays you a visit. It is a good time, too, to say

DON'T GET DISCOURAGED

if your chicks are nearly all cockerels, when you wanted pullets; if the hens do nothing but eat and the pullets refuse to lay an egg; if the finest bird you have up and dies in a night; if it seems as though there was little profit and less pleasure in keeping poultry. There is profit and there is pleasure in it, and those who have obtained most of both from it have felt, at times, just as you feel when discouraged. In the language of the worldly, "brace up and take a fresh hold."

GATHER THE DRY LEAVES.

In the late fall the ground in many places, in village and country, is carpeted with dry leaves, which if gathered and stored for use in the poultry house during the winter, will be found most excellent to cover the floor with deeply. Into the leaves the grain may be thrown, and in the dry, warm litter, the fowls will scratch for their food and enjoy themselves hugely. In this, as in so many other things, a word to the wise is sufficient, and our suggestions are valuable, very often, simply because they prevent the common saying of "I didn't think anything about it, or should surely have done it."—*Bulletin.*

How to Get Hens to Lay.

So much has been written and said on the management of poultry, that it would seem as if those who wish to speak on the subject for the future will be reduced to repeat what has been already uttered. This may be so; nevertheless, people forget so speedily that it is necessary to return again and again to the point if we want to do any good.

The following (says M. Garnot, in *La Basse-Cour*) is an easy and by no means costly method for obtaining a regular supply of eggs during winter, even when the weather is at its coldest. I cannot say that I invented it, but I can say that I have practised it for a great many years.

I will now describe the plan I adopt. As soon as the cold sets in, that is, about the 15th November, I have a quantity of hot dung carried into the poultry house, enough to cover the floor from ten to twelve inches deep. This is beaten down firmly and left till about the 1st of December, then every day for a month the layer of dung is supplied with a fresh layer of from four to six inches deep. At the end of this time the dung is turned over to mix it well, by which means an increase of heat is obtained; thanks to the successive depositions and contributions of the hens whose perches are above. And so I reach the middle of January, when I have all the dung removed, and begin the entire process over again; and this carries me on to the first fine days. By this means I am able to maintain during the coldest weather a regular temperature, and I have the pleasure of obtaining fresh eggs at a time when they are exceedingly scarce.

The expense of this method is merely the labor connected with it, and in winter time and labor is not dear. The manure which I take away is excellent—very superior to that which I have at the beginning, because the fowls' dung is added to it day by day. In this dung, too, the fowls find a large quantity of worms, larvae, and insects, of which they are very fond, and which they rarely get in winter time. I leave them at liberty to go out in the ordinary way; but they know that they should keep inside in unfavorable weather, and they stop and keep their feet warm on snowy days, when it is damp or when it freezes.—*Bulletin.*

The Dairy.

Dairy Farming.

Professor Sheldon recently delivered a lecture on dairy farming at Stranraer. He said it appeared to him that dairy farming would become of more importance in the future than it had been in the past, because milk and fresh butter they could not get from abroad; they would still have to depend on their farmers for this food. It was the question of cheese-making he was requested to bring more particularly under their notice that day. With regard to the conditions necessary to the success of dairy farming, the first was suitable land. The best for cheese-making was that of a sound soil, loamy, and which did not require much artificial manuring. This description of land was more particularly found in Somersetshire. Another important matter in the production of cheese was the cattle they used for that purpose.

Taking them over all, there were none equal to the Ayrshire cattle, which yielded a heavier profit in the way of milk than any other cattle for the quantity of food they consumed. They seemed to put to better purposes the food they ate. He was glad to find that the Cheddar system was adopted in this county as it was the best; even in foreign countries it was the best, making allowance for the difference in soil and climate. A main feature in the success in dairy farming was, having cattle which yield the maximum quantity of milk. Proceeding to speak of the treatment of milk in cheese-making, a matter of the first importance was cleanliness. He strongly impressed on those present the importance of cleanliness. Milk, they saw, was a very peculiar thing, not being intended by nature to be exposed to the air at all. It was liable easy to decay, being an article of food specially provided by nature for the sustenance of the young. They wanted a temperature that was pure and cool. Having referred to the different kinds of cheese made, which he said suited certain districts, he was of opinion it could not be transplanted from one district to another. It was very odd that they should have so much to learn about cheese-making, and the fact that so many cheese were not made perfect was a proof that they had a great deal yet to learn in this matter, and that there was something wrong. He next spoke of the acidity of the curd, and the proper degree of heating; he condemned the practice of breaking down the curd too quickly, which he said required very delicate usage, in order that there might not be waste. Under the Cheddar system they were very careful to break it down gently for awhile at the first. For this purpose large vats with double bottoms should be used. With regard to the ripening of the cheese, the temperature was variable, and nothing could be ripened unless it had a sufficient degree of warmth. There was some difficulty in making autumn cheese that would ripen quickly enough. It was generally found that the cheese made at this season took longer to ripen than that made in the summer time. There was a reason for that, and he instanced a case he had seen in America where the farmer took the morning and evening milk and heated them up to 80 or 90 degrees, letting them stand at that temperature for three or four hours before putting the rennet in; and standing at that temperature the milk ripened. The lecturer then referred to butter-making, saying this, more than the manufacture of cheese, depended upon the breed of cattle. The Jersey breed were the best because better tended, something like as the Arab tended his horse. There had been a reformation in the making of butter, and he cited as a great improvement the centrifugal cream separator. The washing of butter was of great importance, and one of the best ways was to wash it in the churn. In Germany butter was never touched by the human hand. He summed up the results of his address as faults in dairy farming, want of cleanliness, poor accommodation, having an improper aspect for dairy—it should not face to the south, but always to the north; inferior ventilation, neglected temperature, irregularity in work, as many of the dairymaids would leave their cheese-making to go to other household work. Another source of mischief was a want of interest in the work. They must take warm interest in their work, learn where they could, and never sit down as if they had learned nothing.