

In the Poultry Yard

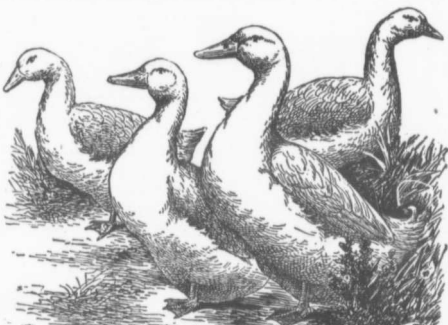
White Pekin Ducks

Of all ducks for farm and practical purposes none stands higher in popular esteem than the White Pekin, valuable for raising on a large scale, and it is the most easily raised of any. It is a very timid bird and should be handled quite carefully. This breed was imported from China in the early seventies, and has steadily grown in popularity since its introduction into this country.

The Pekin duck has a distinct type of its own, and differs from all others in shape and carriage of its body. With some it is credited with having a shape much like an Indian canoe, owing to the full growth of feathers under the rump and the singular turn-

in the tail of the duck are hard and stiff. The thighs are short and large; shanks short and strong, and in color of a reddish orange; toes straight, orange in color. The plumage is downy, and of a faint creamy white throughout. Recently it has been noticed that preference is given in the show room to birds of white plumage. The breeders are selecting as their show birds those that have snow white plumage instead of the creamy white as given in the standard.

The standard weight of the adult drake is 8 pounds; adult duck 7 pounds; young drake 7 pounds, and young duck 6 pounds.—George E. Howard.



ed-up carriage of the tail. The legs are set far back, which causes the bird to walk in an upright position. In size these ducks are very large, some reaching as high as twenty pounds to the pair. The flesh is very delicate and free from grossness, and they are considered among the best of table fowls. They are non-sitters, hardy, easily raised, and the earliest in maturing of any ducks. The method given for raising ducks is based usually on the Pekin as a standard, and the treatment, food, housing, etc., is given as used by the largest and most successful raisers of Pekins. Other ducks are judged for practical qualities by the Pekin.

The cut shows a group of White Pekin ducks. The standard breed Pekin has a long, finely formed head, a bill of medium size, of a deep yellow color, that is perfectly free from any mark or color other than yellow. The color of the bill is very important for exhibition birds, and it is not infrequent that one of the best ducks in a show room is disqualified for having a faint tracing of black in the bill. The eyes are a deep leaden blue color. The neck of the Pekin should be neatly curved; in the drake it should be large and rather long; while that of the duck is of medium length. The back is long and broad; breast is round, full and very prominent. The body is long and deep, the standard gives for adult birds a body approaching the outlines of a parallelogram. The wings are short, carried closely and smoothly against the body.

The birds cannot sustain flight, a two-foot fence being ample to restrain them in an enclosure. The tail is erect, more so than in any other specimen. The curled feathers

Feeding Chicks for Market

Spring chicks usually bring about seven cents per pound live weight, when sold without special preparation. A little feeding will give them an extra market value whether sold alive or dressed, and will pay well for the trouble. There is a good demand this year for a good quality, but dealers do not want the poor scrub. Farmers will do well to put their chicks on the market in good condition; one can make a pound of chicken as cheaply as he can make a pound of pork or beef, and the difference shows in the price. If you have not customers already, ship only to reliable produce merchants. If shipping alive, one must allow for considerable shrinkage.

The most economical method of fattening chickens is in crates. These are usually made 6 feet long, 16 in. wide and 20 in. high inside measurement. Each crate is divided into three compartments which hold four chickens each. The frame is covered with slats placed lengthwise on three

sides—bottom, back and top—and up and down in front. Two inch space between the slats in front enable the chickens to eat from the trough. In warm weather the crates should be placed outdoors in a sheltered position. In unsettled weather erect a rough board shelter to shed the rain. During cold weather the crates should be placed in a warm building. Abundant ventilation is required at all times.

Chickens should be put in the crates when from three to four months old, though suitable market chickens of any age will show gain in the crates. Chickens of medium size, broad, square shape, short straight legs, set well apart, and a good constitution, should be selected for fattening.

A satisfactory ration is one that is palatable and that will produce a white flesh. Oats, finely ground, or with the coarser hulls sifted out, should form the basis of all the grain mixtures. Ground corn fed in excess will result in a yellow flesh of inferior quality; ground peas impart a hardness that is not desirable. Ground oats, buckwheat, barley and low grade flour are the most suitable meals. The following are some satisfactory meal mixtures:

1. Ground oats (coarse hulls removed).
2. Siftings from rolled oats (no hulling dust should be included).
3. Two parts ground oats, two parts ground buckwheat, one part ground corn.
4. Equal parts ground oats, ground barley and ground buckwheat.
5. Two parts ground barley, two parts low grade flour, one part wheat bran.

The meal should be mixed to a thin porridge with thick sour skim milk or buttermilk. On the average 10 lbs. of meal require from 15 to 17 lbs. of sour skim milk. A small quantity of salt should be added. When sufficient skim milk or butter milk cannot be obtained for mixing the mash, animal and raw ~~wheat~~ ^{potato} food should be added to the ration.

The chickens should remain in the crates not more than 24 days. Some will fatten more readily than others. These should be picked out a week before finished, and during this last week it is well to feed a little beef tallow, shaved into the trough along with the mash, about 1 lb. tallow per day to 50 or 60 chickens.

Before the chickens are placed in the crates they should be well dusted with sulphur to kill the lice. They should be sulphured again three days before being killed.

Feed them lightly the first week. Give them water twice a day and grit two or three times a week. After the first week the chickens should be given twice a day as much food as they will eat. Half an hour after feeding, the trough should be cleaned and turned over. Water and grit should be supplied as in the first week.

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