

and I speak from practical experience. There will be an unending struggle for supremacy, to the detriment of both flocks. Not knowing your locality I cannot say which would pay best, hens or ducks. But in our district duck eggs are not saleable, though dressed ducks are in moderate demand. The peculiar color of the white of the egg is objected to here, though why, I cannot say. For to me they are a delicate dish.

It is a pretty safe rule to go by, that all things considered, hens are better for profit. There is no question as to sales of either birds or eggs; at some seasons dressed ducks are not at all a saleable commodity, (say for instance in hot weather) but for chicken meat I never knew the demand to fail.

The Aylesbury Pekin or Rouen ducks are most popular. Personally I prefer the Rouen, their feathers lay closer than the the Aylesbury, or Pekins, and though not appearing so large, they will dress equal in weight for age. They are easily contented with little water, and are the easiest to keep home of any. Their flesh is of fine quality, and they are good layers. One good point in them is, that their eggs are invariably fertile, and the ducks good mothers. They are also very handsome and quick growers.

❖ QUERY * DEPARTMENT. ❖

Beginning the Business.

I AM desirous of going into the poultry business on a limited scale, and I want you to tell me, if you will, just about the first cost of the actual necessities. Supposing I want to start with 25 hens, how had I best make my first purchases, what breed or breeds of birds would be best etc. To sum all up, I haven't even an egg, and I am not a bank. So I want all the information given from an economical standpoint. The answer will probably take up a good deal of space in the WEEKLY, but as there may be many of us bee-keepers who will glance over this department, such information as I have asked, may induce some others to embark in the business besides myself.

F. N. W.

What the first actual cost would be will largely depend on what stock you get, and the convenience at hand for housing them. The building of a house

would entail as much expense as the stock, but if you have any building you can readily convert into a poultry house, the amount will be considerably lessened. I will count on you not having any place and give some idea of cost, but will leave this item to the last.

As to the cost of 25 hens. These you could obtain of good breeding stock and thoroughbred for about \$1.25 each; perhaps less. But this is my advice, *buy a pen* of say cock and 8 females and raise all you can this year of their progeny; this will give you pullets for the winter season that will be laying, while hens as a rule are not large winter layers. Your hens and male bird will be on hand too for another season, and your pullets will not do any worse in stock for being mated back to sire for one year, if you get the breeder to give you unrelated stock at, first any reliable man will do this. If you get 25 hens now, they will begin moulting about July or August and then you will not be so well off as if you purchased a smaller number and are getting young stock. You could get a pen, such as I referred to, of good birds for \$20, or you may get them a trifle less, but if they are worth having, the figure given is small enough. Grain has been very high, and a breeder after the trouble and expense of wintering even ordinary breeding stock of thoroughbred birds, (and risk;) will just as soon keep the birds as let them go at a sacrifice. If you get mongrel stock the birds will cost but 30 to 35 cents each, but take the advice of one who has tried it, and *don't* have any but thoroughbred birds. As to breed, or breeds, would say *one* breed is plenty for a beginner, he can learn all he wants to from the practical study, and working with one variety, if he is an ordinary mortal. The best breed for you is the one you fancy you would like best of the following which are all useful and hardy birds, viz. For eggs and market combined—Silver Laced Wyandottes, Barred Plymouth Rocks, Light Brahmas, Langshans (black) Dark Brahmas, Houdans. For eggs, those mostly summer product, S. C. W. Leghorn, S. C. B. Leghorn, all varieties of Hamburgs. Rose comb white, or brown Leghorns are excellent layers, and lay better in winter than the S. C., in other respects about equal.

If we were obliged to keep only one