

Poultry on the Farm.

The ordinary farmer has this advantage over the professional poultry keeper—his fowls cost him little in the way of food, and almost nothing for care. He usually labors under the disadvantage of not giving his fowls enough care, and managing some things about them with a great disregard for true economy. His fowls, during much of the year at least, live on food that would otherwise been wasted, or on that the eating of which is a positive advantage to the owner. This makes the eggs and poultry obtained almost a matter of net gain. But because the fowls cost little, furnishes no good reason for keeping those that are useless—and such are kept on many farms. In many cases, the stock is never reduced by sale—only by deaths from old age, disease or accident, and by killing a good share of the young for home use.

We imagine that quite a number of our readers, if they would take the trouble to look at their stock of poultry, would find one to half a dozen cocks which had better be disposed of, on account of old age, quarrelsome disposition, or because they are in every way inferior fowls, simply left over, having accidentally escaped killing when young; and also a goodly number of venerable hens, or those hobbling on frozen feet, etc. To keep such fowls over the winter will cost something, and all this cost will be a loss for, even if they do not die, such fowls are almost useless. It will be much better to dispose of them now, sending those fit for eating to market or to the home table, and killing and burying the others.

Many farmers would do well to thus reduce their stock one half. Better care of the remainder might follow with advantage in many cases. It possibly will be neither advisable or necessary to build a poultry house, but some comfortable place could be provided, where the fowls may be protected from storms and cold winds, by day as well as night. Every consideration of economy will dictate good feeding during winter, so as to prevent the fowls becoming poor. Fowls with insufficient food, or exposed to severe storms, will not lay well, while it is equally true, that very many persons do get a goodly number of eggs during the winter months, by giving good food and comfortable quarters to young, healthy hens.

We certainly would not advise farmers to purchase large numbers of fancy poultry; but on many farms, the old stock has run down by long interbreeding, poor care, and no selection. In such cases, a change is certainly desirable, and this would be had by obtaining a good cock, either from a neighbor's yard or from some fancier. For ourselves, we should decidedly prefer to have fowls of some established breed, and would not feel satisfied with a stock widely varying in size, color and form. But whatever class is kept, some care in selection will be necessary to keep them from degenerating.—*Western Farmer.*

Game Fowls Classified.

Game fowls are the highest in blood, the noblest, the most beautiful, the most prolific, the hardiest, healthiest, and best table fowls of all poultry.

Number of sorts classed by the colours of the young chickens:

1. Whites.	5. Black-breasted Reds.	10. Brown Reds.
2. Piles.	6. Red-breasted Ginger Reds.	11. Dark Greys.
3. Blue Duns.	7. Duckwings.	12. Dark Breasted.
4. Red Duns.	8. Yellow Bunchens.	13. Blacks.
	9. Mealy Greys.	

Uncommon-coloured sorts, not much known—1, Red Furnaces; 2, Cuckoos; 3, Spangles, 4, Polecats.

One original wild coloured sorts are these three—1, black-breasted Reds, Partridge hens, fawn breasts; 2, brown-breasted Reds, dark-brown (not black) hens; 3, Red-breasted Ginger Reds, yellow legs, light partridge hens.

All the other sorts and colours were originally bred from these three colours, the white legs, the dark chickens from the Brown Reds, or Dark Reds, and all the others from the Black-Breasted Reds, and the Ginger Reds.

White legs are probably the result of long domestication; all other colours of legs are found wild.

The most common and popular sorts at exhibitions—1, Black-Breasted Reds, dark red eyes, willow-legs, silver-grey hens, Partridge hens; 2, Brown-Reds, dark eyes, dark legs, dark brown hens; 3, Duckwings, dark red eyes, willow-legs; 4, Piles, bright red eyes, white legs, nails and beaks; 5 Blacks, black eyes, black legs, entire black colour.

The Brown Reds—(1), and Black-breasted Reds (5) are the cup birds, and the other three sorts have taken a few cups, and no other colour any cups at all. There are seventeen distinct varieties of Game Fowls, and twenty-seven sub-varieties, or forty-four in all, out of which fourteen are of the Black-Breasted Red colour, alone, sorts with helmeted cocks included.

The best sorts to keep are these on the whole:

For high courage and spirit in fighting—1, Dark-Greys, black eyes and legs, (hardest sort of all); 2, Brown Reds, (cocks red, brown-breasted only); 3, Red Cheshire Piles (bright red eyes, white legs).

For beauty of colour and markings:—1, Black-breasted Reds, willow legs, Partridge hens; 2, Silver Duckwing Greys, willow legs, silver-grey hens.

For good laying qualities (white legs best for table):—1, Black-breasted Reds, willow-legs, Partridge hens; 2, Red Cheshire Piles, bright red eyes, white legs.

Yellow and blue-legged hens lay the best as a rule; Brown Reds are first for shape and carriage; Black-breasted Reds for superiority of colour.

The colour of the eyes is the best criterion of the difference in the blood in all Game Fowls, as "black eyes" show the dark blood (white eggs); "red eyes" the red blood (reddest birds), pinkish eggs; "yellow, or daw-eyes, the yellow strains (yellowish eggs), these being in general inferior birds to the others. "Bay eyes," and light-brown eyes result from crossing.

Game fowls are the best layers of all poultry, with these few exceptions, which do not lay quite so well:—1, Dark Greys and Dark Breasteds, worst layers; 2, Brown Reds, next worst layers in general; 3, Duckwings, when with willow or white legs; 4, Mealy Greys, not a common colour at all. Dark Greys are, however, the only really bad layers of them. Grey-coloured and dark-combed, and dark-faced hens are the worst layers in all poultry.

In the Black-breasted Reds, the clear hackled cocks breed the wheaten-coloured or cinnamon hens, and the striped hackled cocks breed the striped-hackled hens. The true Ginger hens (not cinnamons), breed the Red-breasted Ginger cocks. The strains with red eyes and black eyes are the best birds.

The only sorts now much used for cock-fighting are:—1, Brown-breasted Reds (most common with cock-fighters); 2, Grey-breasted Dark Greys, (hardest and strongest of all); 3, Black-breasted Reds, white legs, dark-red eyes, with the light wheaten-coloured or cinnamon Buff hens. These are the three hardest and strongest sorts of all.

The three quickest fighting sorts are:—1, Red Cheshire Piles, bright-red eyes, white legs; 2, Red-breasted Ginger Reds, bright red eyes, yellow legs; 3, Whites, bright red eyes, white legs (like the Piles).

Other favorite sorts of the older cock-fighters are:—1, Red-breasted Ginger Reds, dark red eyes, white legs; 2, Black-breasted Reds (dark), carp-brown legs, and dark red eyes, fawn-breasted dark brown hens; 3, Red Duns, dark red eyes, white legs (north country).

Willow-legged Duckwings stand the next in courage. Willow-legged Black-breasted Reds are too soft a bird; and Blacks both too slow and too soft to be good. Blue Duns fight worst of all, being soft and weak; all yellow or daw-eyed birds are, with a few exceptions, wanting in spirit and courage. Dark Greys and Brown Reds are the best birds of all.—*Cor Collage Gardener.*

DUCKS IN THE VINEYARD.—It is said in the *Grape Culturist* that a large vineyardist in Illinois keeps not less than one hundred ducks constantly among his vines; he says it is wonderful with what diligence they will dart after all kinds of bugs, thrips, flies and small snails, and he considers them among the best of insect exterminators. Everybody knows that nothing will exterminate insects in a garden so well as a few coops of little chickens.