Rearing Turkeys.

Part II.

LAYING AND HATCHING.

Boxes so constructed that young turkeys cannot get out of them when hatched should be fixed in nearby fence corners and outbuildings the latter part of March for nests, as a turkey will be on the lookout for a nest some time before laying, and having them prepared early will often save the annoyance of watching for a nest in a back field. Chaffy straw will make good nesting material, but should be renewed when the turkey is set. Turkey hens lay anywhere between 10 and 30 eggs before becoming broody, and as each egg is laid it should be gathered and kept in bran in a cool room, turning same at least twice per week. When the turkey egg is taken from the nest a hen's egg should be left in its stead, or the turkey may leave that particular nest. When you are sure the turkey has become broody, give her the eggs—never more than 20—and in doing so, don't neglect to give the nest a thorough dusting with fresh purchased insect powder. The nest should be made pretty flat, otherwise the eggs will crowd towards the center, and if the turkey is of fair size will break many eggs. I allow the turkey to come off the nest when she pleases, but if down where dogs or skunks can get at her, close her on at night. Make sure that she can find water when she comes off, and that is all that is required, for she will hunt her own food and dusting place. About three days before the young turks are due, shake a goodly quantity of the insect powder over the hen on the nest. Don't spare it at this time, for a start free from lice is one of the important points in turkey-raising. I have never had to grease a young poult for lice, and I give the credit all to insect powder applied at this time. I have known many young turkeys killed by a too liberal use of lard and sulphur. At the best, it makes a dirty job of them, and, further, the less handling they receive the better. If you are going to place the hen in a coop that has been used the previous season when taken from the nest, the coop should be given a thorough whitewashing at the same time you dust the hen, so that it will be perfectly dry when required.

CARE OF THE YOUNG.

It is not advisable to bother the hen much when the poults start hatching, as the most quiet turkey becomes cross and "fussy" when she hears them chirping. I try to leave them alone for about 12 hours after I think hatching has commenced, but I then go as quietly and quickly as I can and remove the hen from the nest, by running my hand under her from the back, if possible, balancing her fairly on same and throwing her off. There is no use coaxing or delaying in doing this, for every moment spent in this endeavor only increases the chance of her squashing a poult. The shells are removed, and if all are hatched they are marked in the web of the foot with a small poultry punch, picking the small scale off the end of the bill at the same time. The latter, I fancy, causes them to pick crooked until it falls off, if not removed. I allow the hen to return to the nest for another 12 to 24 hours, depending upon how far hatching has progressed. At this stage the condition of the weather influences my next move. If very cold or wet, I take the hen and her family to a large dry-goods box, placed on the south side of a building, and cover with loose boards, so that I can open them to admit light when feeding. They are seldom kept here more than two days, as these storms generally run their course at this time of year in that time. They are then taken to the coop; in fact, it is only seldom I use the box, for if the weather is moderately warm I take at once from the nest to the A-shaped coop without bottom, and slatted front, the slats being crosswise, about four inches apart. The back is boarded solid. The boards that make the sides are 3 feet 6 inches in length, and the coop 3 feet in depth; the bottom is pretty wide, as this keeps the hen mostly in the center, thereby preventing her trampling the young. This coop is placed upon short grass away from other fowl, and a goodly quantity of fine gravel is placed alongside of same, as well as some road dust in a hollow nearby. It will surprise many to know that they will look for these luxuries as soon as they commence to eat. I should not say luxuries, because they are a necessity.

A broad board to prop against the front of coop at night, and a "scarecrow" nailed to a large plank, so that it can be moved to a different position each day, will be required. The former will keep out cats and skunks, and the latter will fool the hawks and crows, generally, though not always. I am aware that many give the hen and flock their liberty after the first few days, and have fair success, but when a rainstorm approaches they have to run and get them in, or the loss of the weakest is the result—not from the rain itself, but the running through the long wet grass afterwards. Besides, the chances of loss from crows and hawks is increased by their going so far from the buildings. I find that by confining the hen in coop, and letting the young run in and out through the slatted front at will, they will roam as much as is good for them (daily taking in a larger area), and they will go in the coop of their own accord when it rains sufficiently to harm them. However, there is one point in connection with using the coop, and that is to never neglect moving the coop the breadth of itself each day, for young turkeys will surely sicken and die if compelled to hover upon the same spot night after night. I keep the hen in the coop from four to five weeks. If the weather has been favorable she can be liberated in four weeks, and with her flock allowed to roost on the trees and fences near the outbuildings. Many turkeys are lost through the folly of driving them into some small building every night when young to protect them from enemies. These buildings have no ventilation, and are seldom cleaned. Avoiding this is probably the main advantage in using the coop. I should possibly state that no pains are taken to have tight joints in constructing these coops, as it is not required.

W. J. BELL.

Simcoe Co., Ont.

An Ideal Poultry Plant.

During the past winter Prof. G. M. Gowell has kept some 2,000 Barred Plymouth Rock pullets at his poultry farm, established last spring at Orono, about half a mile from the University of Maine. While the plant is owned by the gentleman, he makes use of it in his work as Professor of Animal Industry, for it is a practical application of the principles taught at the College.

The main poultry house faces the south, and is 400 feet long by 20 wide, with walls 7 feet high in front, 5½ in the rear, and a roof with a short south side. A platform, at an elevation of some 2½ feet, extends the length of the building on the front, outside.

The house is divided into compartments 20 ft. square and about 8 feet high at the ridge, sealed with matched boards, and separated by board partitions, with doors swinging each way, enabling a tram car with overhead truck to traverse the entire 400 feet. Each compartment has a grass run on the front side, 20 by 100 feet, and it is proposed, the coming summer, to construct similar runs at the rear of the building, the two runs to be used alternate weeks.

At the right hand as you enter is the roosting closet, the platform of which is elevated 3 feet from the floor. This is scraped clean every morning. Canvas doors, above which are ventilators, drop from above by hinges, closing the birds into their sleeping apartments at night, and are buttoned to the ceiling during the day. On the left of the entrance are the nests for laying, while on the left of the exit are slatted closets which may be used as prisons to confine sitters or quarrelsome cocks.

Realizing the importance of plenty of light and air where so many birds are kept, a large space on the south side is left open for the admission of these germ-destroying mediums. Wire fencing prevents the escape of the birds. Canvas doors, 9 1-3 feet by 3½ feet, opening in, and held up to the ceiling by a button, permit a free circulation of air, while in addition, 12-pane windows on each side admit sunlight. The canvas door is closed at night and during storms that beat into the henhouse on that side. Below these are doors admitting to the run on the south side.

Charcoal, grit and shell are kept in long, triple-compartment boxes, with slant roof and slatted sides, placed against two walls of the room, and are never allowed to get empty, as at all times the hens must have access to these elements. The charcoal acts as a regulator to the bowels. On the front side is a similar single-compartment box, holding a bushel, in which the dry mash is kept. This, also, is replenished each day, and is never allowed to get empty. Large galvanized-iron pails are filled twice a day with clean warm water. The floor is covered with a layer of sand an inch deep. Above this is a generous litter of straw, which is removed every two weeks. In each breeding-pen are 100 pullets and six roosters.

Each morning four quarts of cracked corn are scattered in the litter of each pen; at noon, two quarts of oats and two of wheat. The dry mash is always before them. It is composed of two parts bran, one linseed, one middlings, one corn meal, one beef scraps, and one ajax flakes or brewers' grain. Cut clover, at the rate of 3½ pounds to every hundred birds, is given dry every day.

During January 800 eggs were produced daily, collections being made every few hours. February saw an increase of 200 eggs per day.

In a little house, erected for the purpose, these eggs are sorted with reference to size and color, packed, and shipped by express to the fancy family trade of the Boston markets, shipments being made daily, and no egg being over one day old when sent to market.

Three years ago Prof. Gowell bought this land—some thirty acres—for a poultry plant. In order to have it in the best possible condition for ranging chicks, he fallowed it one summer, and then planted it to potatoes, raising 3,000 bushels of the tubers. Now the crop from that land, instead of being potatoes, is chickens and eggs.

Wentworth Co., Ont. M. B. A.

Would Not Take a Dollar for the Knife.

I received my premium, the Knife, all O K. It is a beauty, far ahead of my expectations. I would not take fifty cents, or even a dollar, for it. Thank you very much. I will try and get some more subscribers for your valuable paper. Wishing you and your paper every success.

Carleton Co., Ont. CLARENCE D. MILLS.

THE FARM BULLETIN.

"A bounty on tree-growing would be of far more benefit to the country at large than a bounty on beet sugar," writes S. B. Elliott, discussing woodland taxation in "Forest Leaves."

Lectures at the Eastern Ontario Live-stock and Poultry Show.

The meetings and lectures in connection with the above show, the live-stock classes of which were reviewed last issue, were presided over by President G. C. Creelman, of the O. A. C., Guelph. Wednesday afternoon (March 7th) session was devoted to sheep. A. W. Smith, of Maple Lodge, a well-known, practical sheep-breeder, discussed the advantages and profits of sheep-raising. From a lifetime's experience, he was prepared to say that no branch of farming on the average yielded more profitable returns than sheep-raising. He had always kept pure-bred sheep, and believed the opportunities for the man who raises pure-breds greater than those of the man breeding for commercial purposes only. He not only came out ahead financially, but was a benefit to his neighbors and his country.

PROFITS IN SHEEP-RAISING.

Mr. Smith designated the profits as the material advantage. It required less capital to equip buildings suitable for the protection of a flock of sheep than any other kind of farm stock; the comparative cost of feeding was less, and the care of sheep was not an expensive and laborious occupation. He contended that sheep would carry from 25 to 35 per cent. more weight per acre than cows, and could be produced at least one cent per pound cheaper, instancing in support of this his own experiences. He spoke briefly upon the care of sheep for exhibition purposes. He believed that sheep should not be housed during the summer months, as he had found outdoor feeding more economical, and had achieved better results than when he practiced housing. He referred to the usefulness of sheep to destroy weeds, at the same time deriving nourishment from them. Mr. Smith pointed out in conclusion that it was possible to defray the entire cost of keeping a flock of sheep from the sale of the wool, leaving the receipts from the lambs clear profit. In reply to a question from John Campbell, as to the proper time for marketing sheep, Mr. Smith advocated holding them until Christmas and Easter, as from one to three cents more per pound could be realized on them than if marketed in the fall. If kept over, however, they must be handled and fed very carefully to insure this profit.

Prof. G. E. Day spoke upon the "Desirable and Undesirable Points in Mutton Sheep," and had in the ring a most excellent type for demonstration purposes. He asserted that all classes of animals must be viewed from the breeder's, feeder's and butcher's standpoints. All were, however, united in one definite aim to please the consumer. The butcher considers the most valuable part along the back, ribs, loin and leg of mutton, and desires a long, broad back, broad loins and well-proportioned leg of mutton. The breeder desires good constitution, or an animal with broad chest, large heart-girth, good length of rib and large barrel, which indicates feeding capacity. Breeders should select sheep with good constitution and desirable type, in order to secure a profitable type of progeny.

In the discussion which followed, John Jackson advised trimming sheep properly before sending them to market or the show-ring. It was in his opinion a perfectly legitimate practice, as it was done merely for the purpose of improving the appearance of the animal. Competent judges could not be deceived by this practice. Mr. Miller said the way to judge the amount of flesh carried on the back was by the thickness of the dock and thickness and strength of neck. English experts judged entirely by this method.

John Campbell, of Woodville, discussed the best markets for sheep, and how to supply them. Three markets were open to the farmers of Ontario, viz., British, Canadian and American, ranking in importance in the order mentioned. Our export trade had fallen off, owing to our not supplying sufficient numbers, and the quality on the whole not being up to the standard. This could be rebuilt, as the present demand for a superior quality of mutton would insure a ready market at a profitable figure. The Canadian market was a good one, specially for early lambs. The Dorsets were well adapted to meet the requirement. Lambs could be disposed of at the most profitable figure in the American markets about this season of the year. Mr. Campbell reiterated what Mr. Smith said regarding marketing lambs at Christmas or Easter. He referred with pride to the record Canadian stock had recently achieved in the American markets, and noted that from the twelve carloads of live stock recently sent from the Guelph to Chicago International Live-stock Show, Canadians returned with over 90 per cent. of the prize money awarded in the classes in which they were competing. He complained that the Government was giving sheep-breeders little recognition as compared with dairymen, and were not giving them the protection they were entitled to from the dog nuisance.

C. W. Bowman, manager Montreal Packing Co., Montreal, who addressed the meeting on "Some Mutual Interests of the Packers and Hog Producers," said that although the business of the farmer and packers were quite different, there was a great deal of mutual interests. While they had been exporting bacon for thirty