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POULTRY

Renewing the Flock

ANY good poultryman can make money out of his chickens once the pullets have reached a laying age. In many cases, however, the profits are eaten up in the rearing of the pullets. "If I could only renew my flock without such tremendous expense, I would make money at this business," a York County poultryman remarked to me last summer. Just about the time that eggs brought were at a minimum and feed bills at a maximum. A few weeks ago I passed this question on to Mr. Lewis N. Clarke, one of the most extensive specialized poultry farmers in Canada. "Can you renew your flock at a profit?" I asked him.

"It costs me practically nothing to rear a pullet to the laying age," Mr. Clarke replied. "The price of a cockerel covers that. I did not sell any of my broilers last spring for less than $1.50 a pair."

"Do you mean," I asked, "that the receipts from the sale of broilers will pay for the feeding of both the pullets and the broilers?"

"Exactly," he replied. "We sell all of our broilers to our egg customers. They are dressed on the farm and packed in ice for shipment. This may be a good deal of a nuisance, but it pays." Then Mr. Clarke added with a smile, "I find most most things which people regard as a nuisance are profitable."

The broilers from Oldham Farms weigh about two pounds dressed, but not drawn, at 12 weeks of age. They are finished on a ration of 100 lbs. flour, 100 lbs. corn chop, and 40 lbs. beef meal. "This is the only fattening mash I know of that cockerels don't get tired of," said Mr. Clarke. "The mixture is fed as a crumbly wet mash mixed with buttermilk or sour skim-milk, and salt enough to make it slightly salty to the taste. We feed the cockerels in lots of 100. During the fattening process each flock has a small colony house and a wire run 25 feet square."

"Then you do not have to credit the money received for your old hens against the renewing of the flock?"

"No, I always have that money for some special purpose," stated the proprietor of Oldham.—F. E. E.

"Cheapness" in Poultry Matters

By Michael K. Boyer.

TOO many begin the poultry business on a "cheap" scale. Anything purchased simply because it is "cheap" is a mistake. Men of the "make-shift" calibre are, as a rule, the unsuccessful ones.

It is always wise to buy the best, and, roughly measured, the best is the cheapest in the long run. The writer has found that in nearly every case the man who persists in advertising that "poultry don't pay" began with cheap, poorly constructed houses, purchased common, dunghill stock because they could be had at table-fowl prices, and fed them on grains not calculated to make them productive, as the price for the proper articles of food "cost too much money."

Beginning with the houses: It is important that they be built of good, strong material, well roofed, and roomy. The cheap houses are not only constructed with poor, second-hand lumber, but, in order to cut down the cost are made narrow, contracted quarters, allowing insufficient room and very poor ventilation.

Then comes the question of stock: It must be cheap. If pure-blooded stock costs two dollars per head, and common dunghills only one dollar per head, it is reasoned that "a man is a fool to pay two dollars for a hen when the same money will buy two hens—and hens are hens, you know!"

Occasionally we will find some excellent layers among common hens, but they are exceptions rather than the rule. On the other hand, pure-breds are the result of careful mating for a particular object. In other words, one wishing to establish a strain of extra good laying stock, will each year carefully make his selections with that object in view. Each selection will then, naturally, follow in the line. This, however, cannot be the case with mongrel birds, owing to the promiscuous mixing of bloods.

Therefore, the thoroughbred or pure-breed fowl is cheaper at two dollars per head than is the mongrel at one dollar, for the reason that we have guaranteed qualities.

Another point of "cheapness" is in the feed. What a common expression it is to say: "that will do for chickens feed," meaning some musty or damaged grain. There could be no more serious mistake. To make eggs not only calls for food suitable for that purpose, but it must be in a pure state, rich in the requirements. The dairyman would not expect a good flow of milk from his cows if he fed a cheap, inferior ration. It is the same with eggs. Good material is required for good results.

How often we find beginners starting out with dunghills, giving the excuse that they first want to test the business before investing considerable money. What capital they have they want to stretch as far as it will go. They intend in the future to dispose of these mongrels and keep nothing but pure fowls, but they hardly ever get beyond the mongrel state. Once mongrels always mongrels. Better invest the amount of available cash in fifty guaranteed fowls than purchase with it double the number of worthless stuff.

Begin on a small scale—limited according to cash and knowledge—but let that start be strictly on the basis of quality. The safest start is made with good, substantial buildings, guaranteed pure-bred stock, and the purest and best of feed. Then gradually grow on the same basis, and the industry will be established on a firm and safe foundation.

Poultry Pointers.

AT the outbreak of diarrhoea, there is often a cry of cholera. It is a false cry, but the case, nevertheless, needs treatment. Boil some rice, and mix it with plenty of powdered chalk—an excess of this will do no harm, as it will effect a cure and pass off naturally.

Constipation in chickens is often noticed during the summer months. It has been advised to use Epsom salts in the drinking water, but this is a rather violent purgative, and very griping in action. It is better to use oily laxatives and purgatives. Linseed meal mixed in the soft feed will act as a gentle laxative. The writer used it daily in the mash—about five per cent.—the year round, and never, in consequence, has any cases of constipation among his fowls. Some prefer a few drops of castor oil in the feed, after making the chicken miss one meal, and thereby rendering it hungry.

A hawk generally carries off young chicks. Where it attacks larger ones, their bodies will be left, and it will be found that death has been caused by the back of the neck and the skull being torn open, and the feathers (if the carcass has been devoured so that the skull evidence is not available) are widely scattered around, but not trailed. Should the chicken be found lying dead on its side, with its neck stretched out, and a small wound in the throat, it is the work of a weasel that has sucked its life blood. If a carcass is found with the head and breast devoured, it is the work of a cat. As a rule, the rat does its deadly work at night, and here the carcass is often found badly mauled. The entrails are generally drawn out, but not eaten, and the carcass is bitten and gnawed in many places.