

Should we Raise More Ducks?

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

As one sees and hears so little in regard to the raising of ducks for market purposes, and as our neighbors across the line raise them so extensively, and apparently with profit, I have been led to wonder at the neglect of this particular branch of poultry-raising.

Since a stream or pond of water is not necessary for success, and as any land suitable for chicken-raising will do equally well for ducks, and as they are more immune from disease, are harder and easier raised than chickens, they prove very profitable. But it is important that a ready market be available before they can be raised extensively. This is of more importance in regard to ducks than chickens, as ducks, to be profitable, must be marketed as soon as they are fully feathered; that is, at about nine or ten weeks old.

Much good work has been done by our experimental farms and poultry stations towards teaching proper methods of raising and marketing chickens, and in developing our markets. Would it not be well to do more towards encouraging the raising of ducks?

King's Co., P. E. I.

C. P.

Eggs Bring the Money.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

It is very gratifying to the farmer, when his friends step on the place and he can show them, among other things of interest, a flock of hens of beautiful color, but it is far more satisfactory if he knows he has a strain of superior layers. Eggs, and not nice plumage, bring him his dollars and buy groceries. But eggs cannot be secured in paying quantities by any haphazard methods of breeding. The science of breeding for eggs is just the same as that of breeding for milk. The only way to succeed is to breed from producers, if you want to raise producers, whether it be cows or hens.

As to my own experience, I may say I always get my full share of eggs, and my hens have done well all winter. But I find, upon looking over the record sheets, that if my whole flock had made the average which was made by my 229-egg Banded Rock hen and her daughters, I would have had 274 dozen eggs more during December, January and February. These, at 25 cents per dozen, would bring \$7.00. However, the price I got would average 32c., or a difference of \$8.80 for only three months of the year. Is it not worth while improving the flock?

They were all fed and housed alike, and it does seem to me there is a great future for the Canadian hen, if we would arouse ourselves to the opportunities we have at hand for improving the laying qualities of our flocks.

These who are too busy to operate "trap nests" should secure cockerels or eggs for hatching from men who have given their time and attention to the work of development and improvement.

Wentworth Co., Ont.

The Sitting Hen.

Although artificial incubation is now almost universally adopted by all poultry farmers and fanciers, there are many who still trust to the "old hen." This may not be from any sentimental motives, but such people as cottagers and farmers, who keep a few poultry only, still find the broody hen most suitable for their circumstances. Success in natural incubation depends largely upon the nest. It must be properly made, and placed in a suitable spot. There need be no elaboration about the box. Size is the main thing, and it must be large enough to allow the hen to turn round comfortably. For preference place it upon the ground, and it may be closed in on all sides but the front, which should consist of a door, composed of bars of wood or fine-mesh wire netting. Just inside, at the front of the box, nail a strip of wood about three inches high, to prevent the nest from falling out or being drawn out of shape. Fill the box to a depth of about three inches with soil, and work it with the hand into a saucer-shaped hollow, pressing the earth well down. The hollow must not be too concave nor too flat. If the former, some of the outside eggs will roll down upon the others, and will be eventually broken; if the latter, the eggs will spread out to such an extent that the hen cannot cover them properly. Having formed the nest with the soil, the next thing to do is to line it with soft hay. Shake the latter out so that it contains no lumps, and then spread it evenly over the nest, working it down somewhat firm with the open hand. In winter time and early spring allow more hay than in summer. It is not necessary to damp the nest; in fact, the latter is far better left perfectly dry.

Always handle the broodies carefully. They are usually extremely excitable, and anyone who loses his temper would do well to entrust the management of this department to someone else. Place the hen for the first day or two on dummy eggs, and do not entrust her with more valuable ones until she has settled down, and become accustomed to the new nest. If she is very wild, it may be necessary to hang a sack or shutter over the door of the nest-box, so as to exclude the light.

The sitting hens should always be given a room or building to themselves, away from the other stock. Any kind of shed will do, so long as it is not too drafty,

and is kept clean and free from vermin of all kinds. A dust bath, grit and water must be supplied. One meal a day is sufficient for the sitters, and it may either consist of barley or cracked maize. Always feed at the same time each day, and if the hens will not leave the nests themselves, they must be gently lifted off. While they are feeding and dusting themselves, examine all the nests for any trace of vermin or broken eggs. In the case of the latter, or when a hen has fouled her nest, the eggs must be washed in tepid water, and clean hay supplied. During the first week of incubation, about ten minutes' cooling will be long enough for the eggs, but after that the hens may be allowed off for fifteen to twenty minutes in genial weather. It is a good plan to mark each nest-box with the date of setting and the time when the clutch is due to hatch, using white chalk.

On the twentieth day, hens' eggs should commence to hatch, and from that time until the whole of the live eggs are hatched the hen may be left undisturbed. It may sometimes be necessary, as in the case of a prolonged hatch, to place a little corn within her reach. Duck eggs may be treated in precisely the same manner as I have advised for hens. It is a mistake to suppose the former require additional moisture sprinkled upon them, and I am convinced that there are more failures in incubation through excess of moisture than through lack of it.

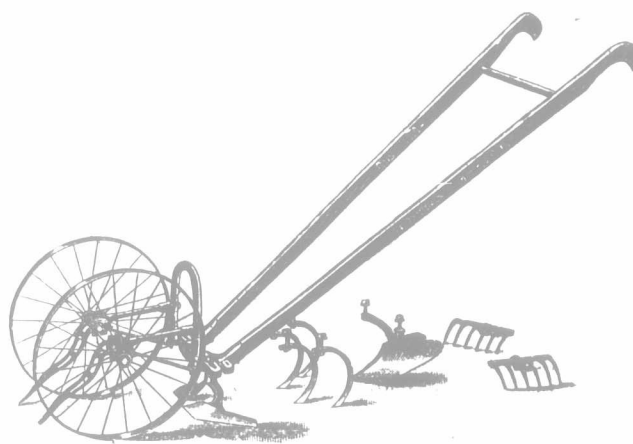
Everyone should make a practice of testing the eggs during incubation. At about the seventh day, if a fertile egg is held between the finger and thumb before a candle in a dark room, a black speck will be observed, and at the larger end the air-cell will be distinctly visible. An unfertile egg, on the contrary, is clear, and exactly like a fresh one. These, if removed on the seventh day or sooner, are perfectly good for culinary purposes. An egg that is added—that is, one in which the germ has died—has a dark shadow in the center, which fades off towards the edges. It also emits a most offensive smell. The removing of unfertile and added eggs is of great importance. The former can be put to some use, and the latter, if allowed to remain in the nest, poison the atmosphere by the gases they give off. Then, if two hens are set the same day, and there happen to be a large number of unfertile and "bad" eggs, the live ones that remain may often be given to one hen, and the other supplied with a fresh lot. Thus there is a great saving of time. To be able to test eggs quickly and correctly, one only needs practice, and, except in the case of eggs which have very thick, dark-brown shells, no elaborate testing apparatus is necessary.—A. T. J., in Ag. Gazette.

GARDEN AND ORCHARD.

The Farmer's Vegetable Garden.

As outlined in a previous issue, the farmer's vegetable garden should, for ease of handling, be laid out in the form of a long rectangle, say 75 by 300 feet, with the rows running lengthwise of the piece, and all rows placed sufficiently far apart to admit of horse cultivation. Mention was also made of the fact that a ridge in the field alongside the root or potato crop would be quite suitable if a more liberal amount of manure than that usually given to these crops is applied and well worked in. So, too, is it important to defer the planting of the vegetable garden until such time as the ground can be well worked. The planting of vegetables early on a piece of ground that is wet and has been hastily worked, is seldom productive of good results.

Generally speaking, the running of drills three feet apart, and raking them down to almost level, will give most satisfactory returns. On the other hand, however, especially on light soils, planting on the level is advisable. For this purpose the ground can be easily marked off with a sled



WHEEL HOE.

An invaluable tool for keeping a garden clean.

marker, which is easily and cheaply made, marking three rows at a time. For marking rows on a raked-off drill, I find a light hand marker, made of 1½-inch wood, 4 inches deep, and about a foot long, rounded on the bottom and at the end, to which a handle is attached—a good device. After a little practice one can run rows straight and at the required depth very quickly.

One of the handiest implement for garden work, if the ground has been properly prepared, is the 12-tooth horse cultivator. The two-wheel hoe,

too, is a great labor-saver, and should be included amongst the tools necessary for the proper care of the vegetable garden. With these two implements, very little hand hoeing will be necessary. Of course, it should be borne in mind that to allow weeds to get a start into vigorous growth increases the cost of cultivation, and, furthermore, these tools do not work well where such growth is rampant. Like the "Breed" weeder, they do satisfactory work only when the weeds are small. The fact is, that one of the chief causes for such unsatisfactory results from the average vegetable garden is that the weeds are allowed to get too much start of the crop before an attempt is made to subdue them. If the work is done when it should be with these two implements, one would be surprised at the small cost of labor required to keep a garden, even of this size, in perfect condition.

I do not wish to be misunderstood as saying that there is any danger of making soil too rich for vegetables, for seldom will any vegetable produce too rampant vegetative growth. But, on the other hand, it is surprising what good results can be had on a moderately fertile piece of ground by giving proper attention to cultivation. It is entirely unnecessary to use hand tools in preparing the soil for the vegetable garden, if the work is not done until the soil is fit to work, when it can be put into perfect tilth to the depth required in a much better manner than any hand labor could possibly do it.

The following list of vegetables are those given in my annual report for 1905, when Horticulturist of the Maritime Experimental Farm, as the most suitable for the Maritime Provinces:

Peas.—Tall: Extra early, Surprise; early, Thomas Laxton; medium, Admiral Dewey; late, Telephone. Dwarf: Extra early, Early Excelsior; early, Mott's Excelsior; medium, Rivenhall Wonder; late, Juno.

Tomatoes.—Spark's Earliana.

Beans.—Green Pod: Early, Bountiful and Lightning; late, Refuge, or 1000 to 1. Golden Pod: Market Wax and Valentine Wax.

Corn.—Extra early: Extra Early Beverly and Peep o' Day. Early: Extra Early Cory and Premo. Medium: Crosby's Early.

Cucumbers.—White Spine.

Squash.—Autumn: Boston Marrow and Golden Hubbard. Late: Hubbard.

Parsnips.—Hollow Crown and Improved Half-long.

Carrots.—Chantenay or Early Gem.

Onions.—Australian Brown and Prizetaker.

Lettuce.—Curled: Grand Rapids. Cabbage: Improved Salamander.

Cabbage.—Extra Early: Paris Market. Early: Jersey Wakefield. Medium: Early Spring and Succession. Late: Late Flat Dutch. Red: Mammoth Rock Red.

Celery.—Paris Golden Yellow, Self-blanching.

Caiflower.—Erfurt.

Beets.—Extra Early: Egyptian Turnip. Early: Eclipse.

Spinach.—Victoria.

Radish.—French Breakfast and Icicle.

Parsley.—Double Curled.

Citron Melon.—Colorado Mammoth.

Watermelon.—Cole's Early.

Eggplant.—New York, Improved Purple.

Brussels Sprouts.—Improved Dwarf.

Kale.—Dwarf Green Curled.

Turnips.—Golden Ball and Selected Purple-top Swede.

Rhubarb.—Linnaeus.

Asparagus.—Conover's Colossal and Argentile.

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Cultivate the Orchard.

"The question of orchard-culture," says the veteran fruit-grower, J. H. Hale, "is one of the important things in connection with successful fruit-culture. If you don't intend to give your orchards the cultivation they need, to keep the soil stirred during the growing months, then don't plant an orchard. You must cultivate for the food of the plant and for moisture. A wonderful amount of moisture is required for the growth of trees and plants. If I were to choose between culture for three or four months during the growth of the fruit, and a ton or a ton and a half of fertilizer to the acre free of cost, without it, I would take the culture every time, and I am as much a buyer of fertilizer as anyone in America."

Good Prices for Apples.

The Georgian Bay Fruit Growers, Ltd., are again to the front, with highest prices in British market. March shipments of Spy, Ben Davis and Mann net average in all grades of \$4.55. In your issue of April 12th, re The Georgian Bay Fruit Growers, Ltd., where it reads, "shareholders receive from 25 to 40 per cent., as to variety, above buyers' prices," should have been 25 to 400 per cent., or, in other words, net us from \$1.25 to \$5.00 per barrel, clear of all expenses. Some of our apples sold as high as \$8.00. Buyers' highest prices were \$1.00 per barrel.

J. G. MITCHELL, Gen. Man.