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The Care of Early-Hatched Chicks

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THE care of early-hatched chickens, those brought out in February and early March, is a matter which greatly concerns the poultryman and farmer: whether the birds be raised for exhibition or market purposes. Natural incubation is not carried on to such an extent as artificial in the early days of the hatching season. The supply of setting hens is limited, which curtails the operation very much. When, however, they have been secured and a number of downy chicks have been brought forth in due time, there are certain things to be remembered and put into practice, which will assist in rearing the greatest possible number of them.

In the first place, a perfectly snug, dry and well lighted place must be prepared for them. Be particular to see that, no dampness is allowed to congeal on the walls or the floor. This may be prevented, first by covering the outside of the place which you have given up to incubation and rearing purposes with ready roofing, and second, by packing sawe ha' or straw, between the rafters of the roof, with strips of wood, nailed crossways, (or wire netting) to keep it in place.

Make sure that there are no drafts from windows or doors, by completely stopping up all chinks in the walls, and providing ventilation by stretching on each side of the upper part of a window frame one ply of heavy factory cotton or burlap. Be sure that there is plenty of light. Arrange the windows high up to the roof, facing the south, so that the light may penetrate well back into the house. Light is a very important consideration, and you need not expect your chicks to thrive well if they are housed in a dim "unreligious" light and have to group around for their food and drink. As the days grow warmer and the chicks grow big the window can be opened for a part of the day at least, and the spring sunshine allowed to shine in. Of course, it is taken for granted that as soon as the snow and frost are gone, the chicks will be allowed to run outside.

KEEP THEM CLEAN

Another essential to success in the raising of chicks, artificial or natural, is to keep them clean. It should not be necessary to go into the reasons for this advice, we simply repeat keep them clean. This is especially needful in regard to early chicks, as they have the rigour of the season to contend with and, therefore, require to be kept free from lice.

A point which scarcely seems to need to be mentioned, but one which is well to follow, is to keep every brood separate; do not let the chicks or the hens mix, or the results will be disappointing to say the least.

For the artificial rearing of early chicks, the housing arrangements, required are similar to those referred to for the natural method. Have the houses front south and lots of light and fresh air obtained, in the manner described. Al-

though there are numerous brooders described as "outdoor" brooders, the care and comfort of the chicks, as well as the comfort of the attendant, will be better served by placing these brooders in an outhouse of the kind referred to. Of course, in the late spring, brooders could be used outside, but even then it is better to have them under cover.

In caring for chicks artificially, follow the instructions obtained with the make of brooder you operate. The manufacturer ought to know how the best results are to be obtained from his own machine. Particular attention should be given to the advice contained in all instruction, not to crowd the chicks.

The feeding of chicks, no matter, by whatever method they are reared is much the same.

There are three aims to be achieved: Do not feed too much; Feed the proper foods; Keep them active.

The proper time to first give food to young chicks is not before they are two days old. Some advise giving the first feed when the

eggs yielding chicks is over, we then remove the hen to the place where we desire her.

Do not feed the chicks hard boiled eggs. This experience, and, I believe, the experience has been the custom for some time, but our of others has been that it has a great tendency to create bowel trouble in young chicks, which can make away with a flock about as quickly as anything else.

Experts in the science of artificially raising chickens, are investigating, with the greatest possible diligence, the cause of "white Diarrhoea" in chicks. The result of their investigations to date seems to be that a portion of undigested yolk, the yolk which enters the chick before it emerges from the shell, is the cause of the trouble.

It seems, therefore, poor practice to give a young chicken hard boiled egg, when the probability is that what the chick received naturally has not been digested. We are advised by medical men, that hard boiled eggs are indigestible;

if this is so regarding human beings, it would also hold good as to the chickens. I have always had a bowel trouble with chicks that were fed hard boiled egg, while when this was eliminated and dry food substituted, my birds were free from such trouble.

WHAT TO FEED

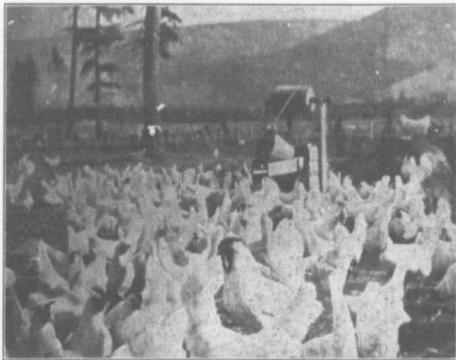
I believe in feeding a first-grade commercial poultry food. It contains all the desirable elements in a satisfactory basic food ration, and in addition, it saves the bother of making our own mixture. Chicks will thrive on it, and eat it continuously for six weeks at least, often longer, and by that time they can be fed grain. Occasionally, I give them a feed of rolled oats, but the chick feed is the main ration, apart, of course, from green food, meat meal, boiled liver, or fine cut bone, the last three of which should be constantly fed, but in sparing quantities at any one time.

The only things we should keep before young chicks constantly is plenty of fresh, clean water, finely ground chick grit, charcoal and oyster shell, of which they will consume considerable quantities right from the start. See that the water is placed on a platform not too high for them to get up to, but high enough to prevent dirt from being scratched in.

If a hot bed can be made and lettuce planted therein, it will provide the very best kind of food for them. They will eat it and thrive. Failing this, mangels are the best.

Feed often, every two hours, for the first four weeks, and little at a time. Never give sufficient for any to be left over. Keep the chicks hungry and they will, if other conditions are right, be healthy also. Of course, on the other hand, there is nothing gained by starving them.

As mentioned before, keep them active. If you are raising artificially, see that your brooders contain about two inches of chaff. Throw the chick feed into this, and they will scratch for it. It must be remembered, however, that this chaff



WHERE CHICKENS PAY THEIR WAY

A profitable department at the Coldstream Ranch, Vernon, B.C., is the poultry. The illustration shows one of the many colony house flocks on the ranch. This flock, "The White Clover" flock consists of 1,000 pure bred white leghorns.

chicks are three days old, and I am inclined to think that they are right. I have reached this conclusion as a result of my observance of the way the hen treats her young. After all, in spite of the tirades of the Incubator manufacturers against the evil habits of the hen, they must admit that they are endeavoring to follow her ways, or to "be natural" in the methods and results of their inventions. If you let a hen follow her instincts you will see that she will sit on the nest two or three days after the first chicks are out, in the hope that one or two eggs may hatch. During this time the chicks in the natural way receive no food. They simply poke their little heads out of the feathers and draw them in again, making more extended appearances later on. So we believe that the proper way with hens is to leave them alone with their young, and when all possible chance of any unhatched