

likely result in torn skin. It is understood, of course, that for killing in this way the fowl is held head down, or suspended from the ceiling by a cord.

Instead of piercing the brain through the mouth, it may be pierced under the eye. When one becomes practiced in sticking birds, this method is probably more effective.

The blade of the knife should be about two inches long and one-quarter inch wide, and should be of a heavy piece of steel. The back of the blade should be about one eighth of an inch thick. It should be ground to a sharp point, with a straight cutting edge, the slope for the point being taken from the back rather than from the front edge.

As soon as the bird has been killed the feathers should be plucked. They come out much easier while the bird is still warm. The birds are plucked dry; dry plucking is more satisfactory, as it gives a better result than scalding.

Many pluckers suspend the bird by a cord from the ceiling or roof of the room. The bird hangs at about the height of the shoulder, and plucking is an easy matter. The tail feathers should be pulled first, then the large wing feathers, followed by the feathers on the breast, sides, legs, abdomen, hips, back and neck.

Birds which have been scalded are usually not finished satisfactorily and do not appear well on the market.

In dry plucking, roasters are plucked clean except for a few feathers around the neck at the base of the head. Capons should be dressed in capon style, that is, the feathers are left on the upper part of the neck, on the upper part of the last two joints of the wing, on the thigh about two or three inches from the joint, and on the back about three inches from the tail, including the main tail feathers.

After the bird is dressed, the feet and head should be washed, using a stiff brush, and the vent should be well squeezed to remove any dung. If this is not done the chicken will probably develop a green butt.

If any food remains in the crop after the bird is dressed, an opening should be made at the extreme side and just above the wing or shoulder joint, and the food taken out.

It is absolutely necessary that the animal heat be allowed to pass out of a dressed bird as soon as possible after it is killed. The numerous bacteria that are always present begin to develop very rapidly as soon as the bird is dead, unless it is cooled. Cold retards the development of bacteria; when the temperature of the bird is near freezing the development is very slow, and when frozen it is practically suspended. A dressed bird, however, should not be placed at once where the temperature is too low, for in that case the bird will not cool properly. If the bird is placed immediately in too cold a temperature, the heat is held within long enough to give the putrefactive bacteria a chance to develop to a sufficient extent to give the bird an offensive flavor when cooked. The birds should be cooled for about twelve hours in a temperature of about 30 to 35 degrees before being packed.