

POULTRY DEPT.

Conducted by
S. Short, Ottawa

In the February issue reference was made to the two methods of hatching chicks—by hen and by machine. We shall discuss in this issue some of the different chick foods that are equally good for the chicks, whether reared in a brooder or by the mother hen. Some breeders use broody hens to rear the chicks hatched by an incubator. This is a good method if the season is advanced, say, May and June, but in March and early in April broody hens are not obtainable in sufficient numbers, and it is then that a brooder becomes a necessity.

As with the incubator, so with the brooder, each manufacturer sends the fullest and most complete directions. The operator cannot do better than follow those instructions to the letter, and only change when experience has taught him that better results will follow any changes made.

No machine will rear all the chicks put into it, or very rarely. It is true also that 90% of the hen mothers trample one or more of her brood to death in the 4 or 5 weeks they are with her. It would be unfair to the machine, too, to blame it for the chicken mortality which

may result from earlier causes. The hens that laid the eggs may have been laying hard all winter and are slightly run down, and while the egg hatches the chick may be constitutionally weak, and no care, whether by hen or brooder, will save it. Buy your eggs from vigorous stock, preferably from fowl that have been kept in cold houses; that is, where no artificial heat is used, and again from fowl that have been fed chiefly grain and very little soft food or mash, for experiments have proved that fertility of egg is higher where hens have been fed dry food. This is important early in the season.

Having removed the chicks from the incubator to the brooder, which has been prepared for their reception according to received directions, the next care is to feed them carefully. Some experts do not recommend feeding for the first 36 hours because the yolk of the egg (on which the chick lives immediately after hatching) takes that time to be absorbed or assimilated. I think that 36 hours is rather long. They will eat readily at 24 hours after hatching. Then let them have very light feed. Fine grit should be in the litter or chaff on the floor of the brooder, and will be picked up by the chicks to their advantage. Early in the season it is much harder to feed successfully than in the warmer weather when the brooder can be placed outside. When obtainable, it saves a good deal of time to feed the prepared foods such as the Cyphers Chick Food, which

is composed of the different grains and meat meal in the proper proportions. This food can be used for the first 4 weeks, and the cheaper grains afterwards.

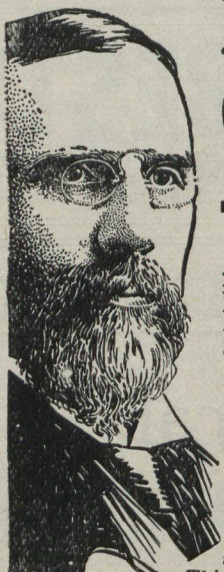
For soft food, the Puritan Meal is much thought of in Ottawa, and is generally used. Hard-boiled eggs, chopped fine, are always good, and stale bread, soaked in milk and squeezed dry, into which a little fine chopped onion or lettuce has been added, makes a good soft feed. If blood or meat meal is not convenient, boiled liver cut fine and fed every 3 or 4 days is excellent. It is well to understand that every 15 chicks put into the brooder will raise the temperature one degree, so watch the temperature that it is neither too hot nor cold, especially for the first week.

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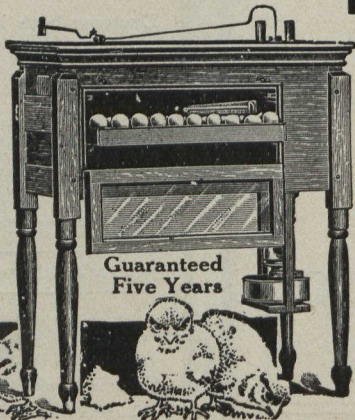
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