

Incubating Eggs.

In order to have early chicks, it is almost essential that the eggs be incubated by artificial means. Failure to have the pullets out early in spring is one cause of shortage of eggs during the winter. Sometimes the hens go broody early in the season, but it is more customary for the majority of them to start laying in early spring and then become broody on in May and June. It has been proven conclusively that the late-hatched pullets do not give winter eggs. A good many do not care to invest in an incubator, as they only wish to hatch from seventy-five to one hundred chicks in a season. Under these circumstances there are two ways of securing the early hatch; one is to buy day-old chicks from poultrymen who cater to this trade, while another method is to take the eggs from your own flock to a custom hatching plant. These plants are not numerous as yet, but it is possible that they will increase in number as the demand for this work increases. H. K. Revell, is one poultryman who has been doing custom hatching for a couple of years with very satisfactory results. The first year around 1,500 eggs were brought to him unsolicited. On the strength of this, he increased the capacity of his incubator the following year and did a little advertising. He was forced to turn down nearly 2,000 eggs, owing to lack of capacity in his machine. All told, 12,200 eggs were set. Again the following year the incubator was run to capacity, and many customers could not be accommodated. Mr. Revell writes: "We were taxed to the limit last year and must enlarge incubation capacity. I charged \$2 per tray of 75 eggs, and ran the machine from March 18 to July 8, burning 3,931 pounds of chestnut coal in that time. Fifteen hours weekly were spent looking after the machine and eggs. The customers brought their eggs and called for the chicks. I believe one might work into a large plant if he so desired, doing work for people at a distance, and combining custom work with selling day-old chicks." From the above statement it will be seen that farmers and poultrymen are quite ready to pay for having their eggs hatched. Those who had their applications in early have early chickens, but those who had their hatch come off in July could not expect many winter eggs. There may be incubators in your neighborhood that are not run to capacity. Possibly only one hatch is brought off in a season, and the machine would be available for custom work. While the natural method may be the most reliable one for incubation there are limitations to its efficiency, the chief of which is the uncertainty of the time the hen will go broody. Whether incubation is by the natural or artificial method, try and have the hatch off early.

Young Hens Lay Best.

It is generally considered that pullets are the most profitable for egg production, but all pullets do not give a heavy egg yield when prices are high. However, if they are hatched early in the spring and are given proper attention, they will bring in more revenue than their two or three-year-old sisters. The accompanying illustration shows the profit on yearling, two and three-year-old birds. This test lasted for three years with sixty hens. The birds were of high quality as the first year 857 dozen eggs were laid by the sixty birds. After paying for feed and labor, there was a profit of \$124 on the flock, or over \$2 per bird. The egg yield dropped to 745 dozen the second year, leaving a decrease in returns of \$28. In the third year there was a heavy dropping off in eggs, as only 576 dozen eggs were produced, but even then there was a profit, though it was less by \$70 than that from the hens the first year. From the above figures it is clearly shown that as a bird increases in age she decreases in producing value. If egg production is the aim, then it will pay to raise sufficient pullets to keep the flock up to strength. On in the summer when the egg yield drops is as good a time as any to dispose of the birds. By so doing the profit on the flock can be kept at high-water mark. When a yearling hen ceases to lay in midsummer, she must be fed for several months before she will again commence laying. With feed at a high figure a poultryman cannot afford to keep very many idlers in his pen. Culling is essential and one time to do it is at midsummer. The pullets should be culled in the fall and only the best placed in the winter laying quarters. At the time the account of production was figured in the illustration, the feed cost \$90 for the sixty birds; this is \$1.50 per hen, which is less than it will cost to properly feed a bird this season. It is the receipts above the cost of feed which count. A limited ration usually gives small returns. The hens that lay the eggs must be fed. If your fowl haven't been doing as well as they should, plan on raising a number of pullets this summer and get rid of the old birds.

A Family Necessity.

EDITOR "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE":
As I send you my renewal for 1918, I feel I owe you a few words to extend my appreciation of your many valuable articles, which appear in your paper each and every week of the year. It is looked for in the home as a real family necessity. I have been a subscriber for many years past and hope to be favored with its seasonable, sound information for many years to come.
Wellington Co., Ont.
ALBERT S. BROWN.

Back-door Poultry Keeping as a Profitable Side Line.

EDITOR "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE":

Now that the greater-production campaign is in full swing, it should apply to the poultry industry as well as others. The question is often asked, does poultry pay? Some claim there is big money in it, while others declare that if all the feed the hens eat were charged up the results would be disappointing. I have often heard farmers' wives boast of how much money they had made the past season from their poultry. When the husband speaks up, "Yes, but if you paid me for the feed you would come out at the small end of the horn." I believe to the women is due the credit of raising ninety per cent. of the poultry and eggs disposed of on our markets today; if the men had their way I venture to say that very few hens would be kept on the farm. Ask any farmer if there is money in poultry, and in nine cases out of ten he will say, "Not if you take into consideration the cost of feed." This, of course, is only guess work—as with many other departments on the farm, no record is kept. The farmer raises the grain and feeds the fowl, the good wife markets the product and takes care of the money, and the poor farmer naturally enough thinks there is no money in keeping poultry. The only way to decide this question properly is to test it out thoroughly by keeping an accurate account of all receipts and expenditures for the year. I have always kept a few hens, when so situated that I could, but like many others was never able to tell with any degree of certainty whether the feed or the eggs and chickens cost the most. Last year I kept strict account, and for the benefit of those who contemplate going into back-yard poultry keeping, my experience may be of some interest.

On January 1, 1917, I started with eighteen White Wyandottes—sixteen females and two males. I keep nothing but White Wyandottes, and my experience is that they are decidedly the best general-purpose fowl in existence. At all the laying tests they have proved themselves the champions, and as broilers or market fowl they can't be excelled. Some time in February I sold a friend two pullets, leaving fourteen. During the summer we lost four hens—one stole her nest away under some boards, and when we missed her and due search was made for the body we found her dead on the nest; one got sick and died, and the other two died just because they wanted to, for I could find no symptoms of any disease. I paid \$10 for an incubator and \$10 for a

spending \$10 for an almost worthless incubator that spoiled half the eggs, we could have made a much better showing on the right side of the ledger. Of course, my fowls are all pure-breds. "Oh, yes," some will say, "yours are pure-breds, but we could not get such prices for common mongrels." I admit it, but why keep mongrels? It costs no more to feed pure-breds than it does culls, and you can always sell your surplus stock at good prices. The proof of the pudding is in the eating.

Receipts.

Eggs sold for hatching.....	\$17.00
Eggs used and sold for market.....	54.77
Chicks used and sold for market.....	22.50
Chicks sold for breeding purposes.....	82.00
Stock on hand Dec. 31 (19 fowls at \$1.50).....	29.00
Total.....	\$205.27

Expenditures.

Stock on hand Jan. 1, 1917, 18 fowls.....	\$18.00
Advertising eggs and fowls.....	11.65
Coal oil for incubator.....	1.62
Incubator.....	10.00
Breeding cockerel.....	10.00
Feed.....	93.16
Total.....	\$144.43

The net profit was \$60.84, on an investment of \$18, being 338 per cent., or a net profit of \$3.38 per head, including the males. To take the average number of hens for the year as thirteen, which would be the maximum, this would show a net profit of \$4.68 per hen. All feed was valued at market price. If anyone can show up a business that will give better returns on the investment than this, I will be willing to quit poultry keeping and go at it.

Middlesex Co., Ont.

R. J. GRACEY.

HORTICULTURE.

The Fruit Marketing Question Again.

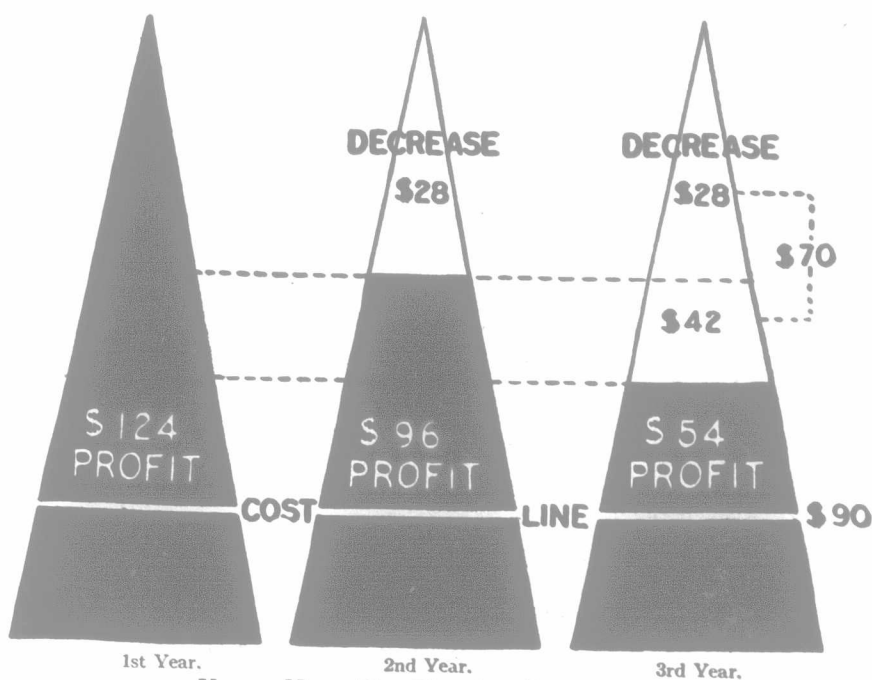
At a meeting of the Niagara Fruit Growers, held at Grimsby, Ont., late in February, P. J. Carey, Western

Ontario representative of the Dominion Fruit Branch, discussed fruit marketing as it applied to present conditions. True, this is a subject which has been well threshed out from time to time; but as every season approaches, growers become interested in marketing methods and look about for ways and means of improving their methods of selling and distributing. The speaker discussed marketing from two angles and said:

"The methods of selling the packed fruit can now be reduced to practically two, namely, shipping to the commission man and selling locally at stations. Both ways, no doubt, have many good things to be said in their favor but they are faulty in some respects, of course. Speaking for the commission men as a whole, I can testify that in most cases there seems to be a desire on their part to handle the fruit to the very best advantage, and I believe, the growers receive fair and honest treatment. I desire, however, to mention one fault that is apparent among the commission men. Where there happens to be a scarcity of fruit on offer, or, say, at the time when the new fruit is first making its appearance on the market, they are apt to take advantage of the scarcity and jump the prices out of sight, regardless of the quality of the fruit, and the retail man finds that he has paid an exorbitant price for what is little better than trash, and while he is laboring hard to sell without a loss, the fruit goes into decay. Nothing in my judgment could be further from right than this method of selling. The retail man who has been bitten goes back determined to buy safe next time, and the consumer who finds that he has paid an extremely high price for an inferior article, is not too ready to repeat his purchase.

"Many things can be said in favor of local buying at stations. The competition between buyers should make it possible for the grower to get the last cent for his fruit. This method of marketing, too, tends to distribute the fruit over a larger area, on account of the many buyers who are anxious to do business. There is one fault, however, with this method of marketing, and that is the grower loses his identity, and consequently takes no responsibility for a faulty pack, or loses interest in growing fruit of good quality.

"In the apple district north of the Lake, we found that where f. o. b. sales were effected and prices fixed, the packers lost interest in the pack, and in such cases the standard of pack was lowered. This seems to be one of the weaknesses of human nature, from which few of us



Young Hens Give Heaviest Production.
(From I. H. C. Bulletin.)

cockerel to mate my pens, and these two items alone assisted materially in raising the expense bill. The highest price we got for market eggs was 60 cents per dozen, and the lowest was 35 cents. The highest figure we asked for breeding fowls was \$5, and the lowest was \$2. For the culls that were used and went to market the price was 20 cents per pound live weight, and the eggs used in the house were credited at the market value at the time. I bought an incubator for we can never get our hens to sit early enough to hatch early pullets. I like to have pullets hatched not later than April for the next winter's layers. This incubator had a guarantee as long as your arm, guaranteeing to hatch a chick from everything you put into it, even snowballs. I tried the first hatch myself, with poor success. The boy thought he knew more about running an incubator than I did, so he took control of the next hatch, with no better results. Then Mrs. G. said that neither one of us knew anything about running an incubator, and she took charge of the next hatch and the results were no better. We set four times—50 eggs each time—and although ninety-five per cent. of the eggs were fertile the very best results that our combined skill could extract from this wonderful machine was forty per cent. of the fertile eggs. To prove that the fault was not with the eggs, we set the first hen that wanted to sit about January 1, and she hatched a chick from every egg. We hatched 80 chicks, and one day two worthless hounds broke into the yard, and before Mr. G. noticed them they had killed ten chicks and a kitten, which the children prized more highly than all the chickens. I am merely stating this to show that if it had not been for the dogs and