

A Hen to the Acre

Willbur Bennett, Pittsboro Co., Ont.

Poultry is at its best as a side line to general farm work. I do not believe that, as a general rule, poultry keeping will be a success on a large scale. It is not impossible to conduct successfully a large poultry plant, but we have very few large plants in either Canada or the United States that have been a success. But with a hen to an acre on the average farm there is no other department of farm work that will pay better.

The writer of this article has had experience with poultry both on a large commercial basis and as a side line to the general farm. Success in poultry keeping we have found depends largely on attention to details, and as the poultry flock multiplies the details multiply in proportion, and soon there are so many little things to be looked after that it is almost impossible to keep track of them.

MOST MONEY IN EGGS

We believe that eggs should be the end and aim of the poultry man on the farm. We can make more money from eggs than from dressed poultry. Of course there is always a certain amount of dressed poultry to market. It is profitable, and it all adds to the returns from the poultry department.

With a hen to the acre on a 100-acre farm we would raise 200 chicks a year. It would be necessary to hatch this many eggs in order to ensure having 50 good pullets to replenish the old stock. We generally keep the pullets for laying two winters but no longer.

We believe that birds of utility breeding will give the best results with the average farmer. They do not require the same care and attention and will stand our winters better than the Mediterranean breeds, such as Leghorns and Minorcas.

ABOUT CROSS BREEDING

In our experience, a cross between the two classes of fowl, American and Mediterranean, produces excellent winter layers, and the birds are more vigorous. If this class of breeding is to be followed, however, it is necessary to retain two flocks of pure bred fowls to carry on the breeding from year to year. With most of us there is a temptation to breed from the cross breeds, and in the end this is bound to result in poorer poultry than we started with. Such cross breeding is only for those who are careful by nature and intend to give their poultry the best of care.

Selection is almost the whole thing in keeping up the vigor of the flock. Professor Graham at the Ontario Agricultural College has a bunch of Wyandottes which have been inbred for 20 years and they are still as vigorous as the best; but such inbreeding must be accompanied by the most careful selection, and I would not advise that it be carried to extremes by the most of our farmers.

INTRODUCE NEW BLOOD

The best method of keeping up the vitality of our flocks is by the introduction into the flock of new blood each year and by selection for the breeding pen of our best pullets. Another way of introducing pure blood and one that I practice myself, is by purchasing a set of eggs from a breeder whose stock I know to be good.

Housing for 100 fowls on the average farm need not cost more than \$75. We endeavor to keep down the cost as much as possible in building our poultry houses. The two requisites are dryness and freedom from drafts. Absolute dryness is of first importance. Too many of the poultry houses on our farms are too damp. We go on the fresh air plan and have cotton fronts to the houses and straw ceilings. The house does not need to be warm for the heavier breeds, and this is an additional argument for utility fowls.

MY BEST RESULTS IN EGG YIELD

One winter I kept six Orpington pullets in a

six by six-foot chicken coop with a two by three-foot window in the front. This window was closed only in the winter. These pullets laid better than I ever had hens lay under other conditions. This instance, to my mind, proves the efficiency of cheap, cold air houses.

In the summer season we make use of the colony system. A few cheap coops should be owned



Women have better Success with Poultry than Men

There is a reason why our farm women take a greater interest in poultry and are more successful with it than the men. They are better adapted by disposition to the work. Success with poultry depends on attention to details, and it is here that women shine. In our illustration may be seen a very successful poultry woman, Miss Beattie Main, Victoria Co., Ont., and some of her pure bred Wyandottes.

—Photo by an editor of Farm and Dairy.

on every 100-acre farm. Chickens and houses can be kept in the orchard where they will do better than if housed in the regular poultry house.

HOPPER FEEDING ADVOCATED

The hopper system of feeding and the colony system go together. We use just the grains that are grown on the average farm, and hence keep



The Cheapest and Best in the Line of Poultry Housing

Fresh air and lots of it is the first essential to a good poultry house. We used to think that warmth was the important point, but we now know that temperature cuts a small figure in winter egg production. The house here illustrated is entirely open at the front and remains so all winter. It is made of cheap lumber covered with prepared roofing. Mr. J. W. Clark, Brant Co., Ont., who owns this house, considers it an ideal one for the farmer.

—Photo by an editor of Farm and Dairy.

down the cost of feeding to the minimum. Ground oats is one of the best feeds we have. Wheat, of course, is our standard feed for poultry.

For winter feed we use the ordinary farm grains, feeding in a litter on the floor, enough being scattered around to keep the hens hungry

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From Incubator to Fattening Crate

D. Burch, Norfolk Co., Ont.

We farmers have to raise about four chickens to get one pullet suitable for laying purposes. That is, we have to raise 400 chicks to get 100 good pullets. For this reason I prefer to keep birds that are of the market type, so when they are marketed they will bring fair value for the work and expense we have expended on them.

We have a 200-egg incubator. We try to have broody hens ready for the young chicks when they are hatched; if not we have a home-made brooder which we prefer to the one we got with the incubator.

THE CHICKS' FIRST FEED

For the first feed of the chicks, we boil the infertile eggs that are tested out of the incubator. We make a Johnny cake with corn meal, soak it in milk and squeeze it out dry. As soon as the chicks are large enough we put cracked corn and wheat in a hopper and keep it before them all the time. The hopper is inside of a large covered, wire feeding crate to prevent the old hens and other poultry from eating the corn intended for the youngsters. This method saves a great deal of time in feeding and gives the developing chickens as free a range as possible, which is essential to success in raising poultry with the least amount of work.

We keep them growing. We do not let them stop, so that when they are ready to be fattened they will be strong, healthy birds, which is very essential to best success in fattening.

FINISHING MORE THAN DOUBLES VALUE

My experience in fattening is that it does not pay to start feeding them until they weigh about four pounds. A four pound bird at seven cents is worth 28 cents. The same bird at six pounds is worth 12c a pound, or 72c. Three years ago I induced one of our neighbors to try fattening 40 birds, and he had good success. Some other neighbors also tried it with profit.

In 1911 we fattened 120 birds. This year (1912) we will fatten about 1200 birds. If these 1200 birds had been sold at the market price of seven cents a pound they would have brought \$836, four pounds each. When fattened to six pounds each, it means 7,200 pounds, at 12c, \$864.

This result is no dream. Anyone can make money equally fast who will attend to his poultry and market it in the best possible shape. There is nothing that hurts the poultry market more than to flood it with poor, thin poultry. It pays better to fatten the poultry than any stock we have on the farm. The cost will not exceed 15c a bird for grain. I use the crate recommended by the poultry department of the O.A.C., Guelph. We dry pick all the fattened poultry and never kill them unless starved for 24 to 36 hours previously.

Warm poultry houses breed disease in the flock. —Prof. W. R. Graham, Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph, Ont.