POULTRY YARD

The Poultry Man

Wilbur Bennet, Peterboro' Co., Ont.

The most important part of the whole poultry business is the man himself.

The man who makes a success of poultry to-day must have a genuine love for his fowl. He must not have a lazy streak in him. These two features properly applied, with the addition of some brains, will give him eggs in winter from his flock. He will not need a hospital or medicine chest sooner than a hatchet, which should be the remedy in all cases of debility, weak lungs, or sick birds, and thus the vigor of the utility flock is kept up to the highest notch. A fancier will generally doctor up and breed from anything that has the colored feathers. Not so however the man who wants to make his flock pay for its keep in marketable eggs and dressed chickens.

Care of Poultry

"If poultry were properly cared for, they would give better returns than any other farm product. It costs about $1.45 a year to keep one hen. Plymouth Rocks and White Wyandottes are the best general purpose fowls. It is not advisable for a farmer to invest in an incubator, unless one of the family is prepared to give it proper care and attention. A better plan is to set four or five hens at once. The eggs should occasionally be tested, and the rotten ones taken away. Thus, if many of the eggs are bad there is a chance to put new eggs under the spare hens.

It is better to set hens at night in a separate brood house, first taking care to give them a thorough dusting with insect power, or when the chicks hatch the parasites will bore into their heads causing death, unless the infested parts be smeared with grease.

Hens should not be set after June, as young chicks do not thrive well in hot weather. No food should be given to the birds until they are over a day old. The yolks which their bodies have absorbed, are sufficient to sustain them. The first food should consist of bread, soaked in milk, squeezed dry, and crumbled hard-boiled egg; also bread crumbs and rolled oats. Later on a mash could be given of bran, corn meal, middlings and milk.

Age Limit of Eggs for Setting

I have a cockerel and two pullets that I raised from an imported setting of Buff Orpington eggs. I have mated the trio and want to breed only from them, so as to have as many of this kind next season as possible. As I only get an average of one egg a day, it will take some time to save a setting. How long will an egg remain fresh enough to hatch out strong, and what is best treatment while eggs are waiting to be set.—L. R. C., Cumberland Co., N. S.

As eggs are now being successfully sent long distances for hatching purposes, it follows that they will keep under favorable conditions, for some time. An egg a day would only mean two weeks saving to get a setting. The first eggs will certainly keep that long and hatch well afterwards, though they will be a few hours later than those perfectly fresh. While saving them, lay them on bran and turn every day. Keep in a cool, dry place.

A House for the Winter Layer

Wilbur Bennet, Peterboro' Co., Ont.

Having a properly constructed and ventilated poultry house is essential to winter egg production. I do not favor warm and expensive houses, as they are not required. Do not build double walled or artificially heated buildings. Such are unnecessary even in the coldest weather. What is required is a house tight enough to prevent all draughts, and one that is perfectly dry. An earthen floor is the best possible, and also the cheapest, and the windows should be generous, made either of glass or cotton curtains, placed high enough on the south side to allow the sun to shine into all corners of the interior. Plenty of sunshine is the best disinfectant we can have, and should never be stinted.

A straw loft in a double pitched house, is a grand thing in doing away with the moisture in winter, and it helps also to keep the house cool in summer. The interior of the house should be built as simple as possible, so as to allow of easy cleaning, and the keeping clear of vermin. The walls should be whitewashed at least once a year, and coal tar or liquid lice killer applied to the roosts and fixtures frequently and there will be no trouble on this account. The same thing should be done with the brooders and other coops. The litter on the floors should be changed often enough to have it always dry and clean.

Fowl may be kept in almost any size flock, some people having as high as 2000 together, and using the hopper feeding system with success. Of course in the large flocks, they are kept solely for egg production, but for breeding purposes it would be a different matter. So far as my experience goes, I think a flock of 50 about right, if they have the necessary floor space.

Need Grit and Vegetables

My hens are not laying and mope around a good deal. They do not seem hungry and leave their food after eating rather listlessly. I feed good grain, changing from oats to wheat, and some corn (cracked). The pen is a comfortable one, and fowls seem healthy, but pale in the comb, and they give no return for the feed given them. What is the trouble?—Mrs. T. B., Sask.

The trouble appears to be lack of grit, and probably the birds require some vegetable food as well. You can get first-class grit from your feed store, as most of these stores now carry a stock of it. It is very cheap, only about one cent a pound. The vegetables you can give in the form of cabbage heads hung in the pen, or mangels, split and stuck on a nail within reach. With these additions, and plenty of clean water, you should have a healthy flock, and get eggs.

The Breeding Pens

How soon should the breeding pens be mated up in order that I may have chicks in April that will be from the male and females we want to breed from? How many hens would you advise to mate with one male, of the American class? Are any males needed with the general laying flock?—J. W., Carleton County.

It is time the breeding pen was mated up now, if results are wanted from that pen, for April breeding. You can mate 8 to 10 females to one male of the American class. It is much better to have no males with the general laying flock, when eggs are wanted for market, or home consumption. This gives an unfertilized egg, that will keep indefinitely, and even after being incubated for some time, would still be as sweet for use as when fresh. Most of the large egg farms now keep their layers away from the male bird, and thus get a better class of eggs to supply their trade.

Mites in Incubators

After running my incubator in the cellar for a couple of hatches, I found it was covered on the inside with a small mite-like insect. They cannot be hen-mites as the machine is a new one, and has never been near where poultry is kept. What are they, and what will keep them down?—J. R., Peel Co., Ont.

Your cellar is probably a little damp, and the insects are caused by that, and while harmless, they are disagreeable to work around. A tar disinfectant would probably expel them. A preparation that is spoken highly of, and recommended for such purposes, is "Zenoleum." This is a tar product, and has the additional advantage of being "Made in Canada," the plant being at Windsor, Ont. It is carried by druggists all over the country, and you can likely secure it easily. It is also said to increase the vitality of the chick if used in the incubator.

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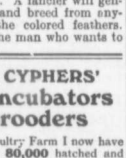

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