

Laying and Incubation.—The duck, with the exception of the Indian Runner, is not noted for heavy egg production but the Indian Runners frequently lay as many as the ordinary hen and may lay every month in the year. Usually the other ducks do not lay before spring. When they are at liberty to go where they please, they may hide their eggs in nests which are built outside the poultry yard, or they may drop them any place about the premises. Therefore it is better to keep them closed in until after laying, which takes place during the forenoon.

One male is sufficient for four to eight females. When there are too many males in a flock at mating time, they quarrel and the eggs are not properly fertilized. The eggs kept for incubation should be of average size and as fresh as possible. However, duck eggs keep their fertility longer than hen eggs. Eggs kept for incubation should receive special care; they should be kept in a cool place, on a layer of bran, sawdust or dry sand. As duck eggs are very susceptible to cold, they should be covered if set under a hen, when she leaves her nest in quest of food.

The duck is a good sitter but is seldom used for this purpose. Preference is generally given to the hen, which takes very good care of the ducklings. Large hens should be selected for the purpose. The hatching lasts from 26 to 29 days. Artificial incubation is generally used in commercial plants. It enables the breeder to have the ducklings ready for the market at an early date.

Care of Ducklings.—When the ducklings are hatched, they should be left for ten hours or so under their mother or in the incubator; and should not have anything to eat for 24 to 48 hours. They may be allowed a little water and milk in a shallow pan to drink so that they may just dip their bill without wetting their bodies. If they should become wet they ought to be put near a fire, otherwise they become chilled and often die. The first feed should be a mash consisting of stale bread soaked in milk, hard boiled eggs, bran, green food, finely chopped. Curdled milk may be added. Later on a fairly soft mash of corn flour, mixed with cooked potatoes will make an excellent meal. Such roots as carrots, turnips cooked beets, may also be used. It is well to add a small quantity of animal food, blood, meat, flour, butcher's scraps, etc.

The mash should not be too thin, otherwise it will cause diarrhea. A small quantity of gravel or coarse sand should be added.

All cooked roots and tubers, lettuce, fish (in small quantity) given judiciously are all suitable for duck raising.

Cold and rain are very injurious. A duckling that has got wet by rain or otherwise in the first eight or ten days of his life is in great danger of dying. He drowns quickly in little water. Do not leave wet ducklings in the sun for the purpose of drying them, they might get sunstruck and die. Do not let them take a bath until eight or ten days after birth, and then only for a very short while and if for market they are better kept from swimming at all.

If no running water is available or if there is no pool big enough so that they can swim freely, a tank should be set up with a sloping board at both ends so that the ducklings may easily go up, or come down.

When the duckling is a month old if for stock purposes, it may be given its entire freedom if there is a stream in proximity. All it requires is a meal at noon and one at night. Ducklings well fed, in regularly increasing rations, are ready to market at two to three months old.

Ducklings that are reserved for breeding purposes should be selected among the best thrifty specimens and from an early hatching.

Ration for one month old Ducklings.—Bran, 2 parts; cornmeal, 2 parts, shorts, 1 part; beefscraps, $\frac{1}{2}$ part; gravel, crushed oyster shells or sand, 3 per cent mixed with milk or water, feed them all they will clean up three times a day. (Fig. 2.)