

POULTRY YARD

Laying a Foundation for a Poultry Business

Bert Smith, Lambton Co., Ont.

Best results in feeding seem to come from the hopper style of feeding, with a supplemental feed or two during the day of whole grains.

At Guelph Agricultural Farm, some hens that were put out in a corn field with a flock of chicks, and given no more than they could pick up in their wanderings, not even water, came out in the fall ahead of the yard fed birds. Conditions were ideal for that kind of experiment, however, and the chicks never lacked an abundance of food, mostly grasshoppers and other insects.

Do not try to raise your chicks in a yard where there is no shelter from the hot sun. Give them a shady place, and a nice loose spot of soil in which to roll and take their regular bath. This idea of the chicken's bath is no joke. They will be found to take one as regularly as their owner (perhaps offender), if only given the chance. It is also just as healthy for the fowl as for the man. If allowed free range, the chicks will find enough meat food for themselves in the summer time, but if yarded up, it is difficult for them to forage in this line, and something to take the place of the bugs they miss must be provided. This can be done by getting some cut worms from the butcher, many of whom now have it prepared fresh every day or so, and sell it at a low price.

The writer always advises the beginner to use pure breed of fowl for the reason that while it costs no more to raise a pure bred chicken than a cross bred, there is a possibility of some other beginner wanting to buy one of your spare cockerels at a better price than you can get in the market. Sales of this kind are the cream of the business. Another chance the breeder of pure bred poultry has to get back some of the money he has invested, is in the selling of eggs for hatching at an advance on the market price, that is quite an addition to the profit side of the business.

It looks easy to sit down and figure out that because in your first season in the poultry business you have made each hen show a profit of \$1, if

you now go into it with 1,000 hens, your profit will be \$1,000, with 2,000 hens a profit of \$2,000 and so on. There has always been found to be difficulties in management of the big flock, however, not met with in caring for a small one. Hundreds of birds together seem more liable to disease, and often endless troubles are the lot of the poultryman who after one season of fair success launches out in the hope of multiplying his success by hundreds or perhaps thousands. This is not said with the object of discouraging but of warning the beginner not to relax his or her care in the slightest degree, and to be ready if trouble comes, to combat them by trying to make the surroundings of the flock as near to nature's way as it was for the small flock that paid so nicely the first year.

The experience gained will be found very useful.

Probably the first difficulty will be that with a flock of thousands, the land becomes foul. This will show that the range is not as abundant accordingly, as it was for the small flock. This makes it necessary to renew the soil by turning it over, either with spade or plow. At the same time, a seeding down may be done with some kind of grain, and the birds will eat the young shoots, and thus receive the benefit of a green food. As the difficulties are successfully met, and overcome, it gives the novice confidence, and the experience thus gained by practical test, will be worth more than bushels of theory.

Some of the chickens that are now being followed for profit by those in the poultry business are, the raising of broilers, the marketing of a particular breed of strictly fresh eggs, for which they receive a nice margin over the regular market from their customers, and the catering to the market for broilers. The quickest returns, and the nicest, are those resulting from the sale of a nice lot of early broilers. There is an unlimited market for this product. The chicks are hatched in incubators on a large scale, and are forced to a rapid growth in brooders till they are 2½ to 3 months old, when they are dressed and sent to the city market for use in the higher class restaurants and hotels, a choice broiler bringing anywhere from 20 to 40 cents a pound. This is the quickest return, and a nice branch of the business, one well worth cultivating and making a special feature. The market can be developed by personal arrangement with the consumer, who, if he has a demand for broilers, will be very glad to take all you can supply, and it will pay you to only send him first quality all the time, so that he can depend on it being up to the standard and there will never be any kick on price.

The egg trade is one that can be made more profitable if some trouble is taken in marketing the product. Many stores have a lot of special customers whom they are careful to supply with nothing but the best, and who are willing to pay higher prices for eggs if they are sure they are fresh, than for an inferior grade. These dealers will be glad soon as you establish their name as always to be depended on as fresh. Many who are in reach of a city, have their own customers, and can get rid of all they have at the highest prices. These have the advantage over those who must sell to a dealer.

There will always be some roasters every season, as a lot of the early birds must be raised in order to have a new flock of layers for the next winter, and the cockerels must be disposed of in that way. This, however, is not the most profitable part of the business, unless a good many can be sold for breeding purposes to other poultrymen.

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