

Our Poultry Corner

If you have some things you do not understand in connection with your poultry and want some information, state your case briefly and to the point, writing on one side of paper only, and address it to THE MONITOR PUBLISHING COMPANY LIMITED, we will submit it to Prof. Landry, and when his answers are received we will publish them withholding your name if you so desire it.

SKIM MILK FOR LAYING HENS

During the past three or four years poultry raisers have been reading more or less about sour skimmed milk as a food stuff for poultry of all kinds. Particularly has the public been told through many poultry papers and station publications of the probable value of this bi-product of the dairy as a food for baby chicks. In localities where sour skim milk can be obtained for a fair price, the question has often been raised as to whether or not it is an economical food for the laying flocks. This experiment has been conducted with the idea in mind of determining the exact value of sour milk as a supplementary food stuff for laying fowls measuring this value in terms of surplus eggs produced. The following is a record of certain studies along this line, recently conducted at the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station.

Two pens of 100 Single Comb White Leghorn pullets each, all March hatched were selected. These birds were as uniform in size development and quality as was possible to obtain. Both flocks were kept in a hollow tile laying house, both pens being exactly the same in size, and furnishings, and both flocks were managed under absolutely similar conditions. The regulation New Jersey State Rations were fed in both pens. Pen No. 22 received sour skim milk in unlimited amount daily. Pen No. 25 received no skim milk.

For lack of room it will be impossible to show the complete tables giving the detailed results secured from this study. However, a few figures must be known to be appreciated. Pen No. 22 receiving sour skim milk laid during the first twelve months, 12,044 eggs, or an average per cent production of 34.4%. The value of these eggs on the wholesale market was \$375.04. The food cost, including skim milk, was \$116.16, leaving a net profit above all food consumed of \$277.34. Compare with these figures the results secured from Pen No. 25, which received no sour skim milk. The numbers of eggs laid during the first 12 months was 8382, or an average per cent production of 25.76%, with a resulting value of eggs produced of \$256.14. The cost of all food consumed in this no skim milk pen was \$99.21, leaving a resulting profit for the pen above food of \$155.93. Finding the difference in profit where skim milk was fed, we find an increase of \$121.41 in favor of skim milk, or based on the record of this experiment, skim milk increased the profit over \$1.00 per bird. A study of the food consumption shows that the milk fed pen consumed considerable more food, due probably to the increased production. In addition to this study here enumerated, four other tests with younger and older birds and with birds of different breeds were run simultaneously. The results of all these studies verify the differences shown in this particular instance, although in no case was the difference quite so pronounced. The conclusion reached from a careful analysis of these and other records of similar nature are as follows:

1. Sour skim milk has a very definite place in the nutrition of laying hens, being a splendid source of protein food, the element so necessary for the production of eggs.
2. The returns measured in number of surplus eggs produced indicate that the sour skim milk has nearly five times the value paid for it.
3. The feeding of sour milk kept the birds in better physical condition, lowering mortality and keeping them practically free from disease.
4. The feeding of skim milk slightly increased the consumption of other parts of the ration, probably because the skim milk kept the digestive organs in splendid running order so that they were able to handle larger amounts. It is thought that on a commercial basis this factor would appear more strongly than it did in the somewhat limited experiment.
5. Egg producers can afford to pay from 40c to 80c per one hundred pounds for skim milk.
6. Sour skim milk can be fed in open pens, thus necessitating very little labor.

HARRY R. LEWIS.
New Jersey.

HOW TO CLASSIFY FOWLS.

Although there are several very excellent methods of classifying the many races of domestic poultry, there is none so good as by means of economic characteristics. It may surprise some to know that there are over a hundred distinct breeds of poultry,

and upwards of three hundred varieties. Many of these are of no value to the utility poultry-keeper, since they are merely ornamental and possess neither laying nor table properties. Sometimes fowls are classed according to country of origin, and dividing the breeds thus we have the principal classes—the Asiatic and the Mediterranean.

The Asiatic is the large heavy bird, possessing good edible qualities; the hens, as a rule, are poor layers, but reliable sitters. The Mediterranean on the other hand, as a small-bodied fowl, carrying a single comb; the hens are splendid layers but poor sitters, while the fresh qualities are unsatisfactory. Another method of classifying is by means of color of plumage, in which case we have white birds, black birds, buff birds, etc., but since this serves no useful purpose to the utilitarian it is not worth while discussing it. Then, again, fowls are sometimes classified according to the presence or absence of leg feathering, to the shape of the comb, to the possession of the fifth toe, and in many other ways, none of which, however, are of any practical value.

The best and only really satisfactory method of classifying fowls is by means of their economic qualities since this denotes at once for what purpose a breed is most suitable. Dividing the varieties in this manner, we have four great classes, namely: (1) The table (2) the non-sitting or laying, (3) the general purpose, (4) the fancy. To the fancy belongs by far the greater number of breeds, including, as it does, all the varieties of Bantam and Game fowls. Fancy fowls are those that are bred or selected for their outward characteristics only—their plumage, shape, comb, wattles, and general appearance. Provided that these points are correct, the number of eggs the hens lay, or the quality and flavor of their flesh, is of small importance. The fancy is a great and very valuable class, and there is not the least doubt but that had it not been for the fancy breeds of poultry, the industry, as a whole would not be in anything like its flourishing condition.

WATCH FOR LICE

To keep a flock of chickens free from lice—especially if they are hen-hatched chickens—requires eternal vigilance. Keep a patch in the dry part of the run dug up so that they can take a dust bath at pleasure. Examine them frequently and on the first appearance of lice get busy. For head lice a little carbolic vaseline rubbed lightly on the top of the head will be found effective. For body lice of the insect powders will be found good, but care should be taken to see that too much is not used on small chicks. Sulphur is excellent, but many a chick has been scalded by the too liberal use of this remedy in hot weather. It is safer to use it mixed with fine sifted coal ashes or fine road dust.

In fact the dust alone will be all sufficient provided it is used often enough.

The following method of dusting chicks will be found convenient and effective. Take a pail of sifted coal ashes or fine road dust, and thoroughly mix with it some sulphur—say about a pound—then take a small barrel or keg, hold the chick by the legs, head down and work the dust freely into the fluff and under the wings. The more the chick struggles the better the dust will get through the feathers. If you have an assistant to hand you the chicks you can dust them almost as quickly as he can hand them to you, and by using the barrel none of the dust is wasted as it may be used over and over again.

A powder that has been recommended by an American Experiment Station is as follows: Gasoline, 3 parts; crude carbolic acid, 1 part, enough plaster of Paris to take up all the moisture.

Blue ointment is excellent for use on fowl, but it should be handled carefully. A piece the size of a grain of wheat rubbed round the vent and under the wings will rid a fowl of body lice in short order.

GEORGE ROBERTSON.
Central Experimental Farm.

Egg production rations would not be complete without a general supply of cracked oyster or clam shells. Shells do not take the place of grit as they are soluble and supply a large quantity of lime for the construction of egg shells. Old plaster, granulated bone and burnt bones are also excellent for this purpose.

The Farm

HOW FAR NORTH CAN WE FARM?

(By Aubrey Fullerton in Canadian Countryman)

The time was, not so very long ago, when the average Canadian farmer looked upon the wheat belt of the prairie provinces as the limit-country. It was far away from Nova Scotia and Ontario, to be sure, and the pioneer who went there seemed venturesome if not fool-hardy; but in a comparatively few years we have outgrown that end-of-the-earth idea about the West. Everybody knows that now the agricultural belt has widened out still more, to Peace River and thereabouts, which is considerably further from Manitoba than Manitoba is from Bruce County. Peace River farmers are, in fact shipping wheat now to the outside market, and milling flour of their own; and there seems to be a likely prospect that that northern district a thousand miles north of the international boundary, will be soon one of the finest and richest farming countries in Canada.

But there is a beyond even to this. Farming in Canada will not reach its limit of latitude when Grande Prairie and Peace River have filled, for still farther north is the untouched Mackenzie River country, whose agricultural possibilities are seldom recognized because they have not yet been needed. The facts are these: In the valley of the Mackenzie, from Lake Athabasca to the Arctic Ocean, is a tract of land a thousand miles long and at least thirty miles wide on each side of the river, much of which is potential farming country of a very good kind. Its soil is fertile, and is practically the same alluvial loam that characterizes the heavy-crop lands of the southern prairies. Generally speaking, it may be assumed that the areas now covered with natural forest will make good farming land, and the wooded tracts east of the Mackenzie which extend to a width of from twenty to forty miles, to the edge of the Barren Lands, and west of the Mackenzie to the mountains. Like most other wooded country, this valley belt is varied with occasional open spaces, not all of which are promising from the farmer's point of view, but some of which undoubtedly are.

Markets are Distant

It is not to be understood that this tract of sixty thousand square miles of sub-Arctic farming country will ever figure very largely in Canada's farm export business. Whatever else happens, the distances must remain, and far-North crops would have a long way to market, even if the railroads pushed in. Moreover the area is of limited extent, and subject undeniably to severe or uncertain weather conditions, which would work against the production of surplus crops. But the point is that the agricultural possibilities of the Mackenzie valley are sufficient to make it reasonably certain that its crops could support a substantial population of its own when the time came. That time will be when the vast mineral resources of the Top Country are developed, as some day they surely will be. There will then be a local market for home-grown produce, and with such a market farming in the arable parts of the long northern districts will be entirely feasible.

No one seriously expects that the wheat belt will be extended into the Mackenzie country very soon or very far. The chances, it must be admitted, are against it. Nevertheless a good deal of experimenting is being done with that possibility in view. For the past ten years wheat has been grown on the Peace River, six hundred miles north of Edmonton, and at about the same latitude as Lake Athabasca. Recent reports show that nine varieties of wheat sown at the Dominion Government station matured in from one hundred to one hundred and twenty days, and yielded from thirty-nine to fifty-eight bushels per acre. From these several varieties will in time be produced a wheat sufficiently hard for the country another remove beyond.

As a matter of fact, some wheat has already been grown at Fort Providence, above Great Slave Lake, and for a period of years has ripened about the last of August. At Fort Simpson, however, which is the next point north, it will not ripen. A little past latitude 61 may therefore be taken as the limit of wheat culture, unless the Government's experimentation yet produces some new Arctic variety.

Barley is more properly a far-North crop. It grows well at all points along the Mackenzie as far up as Fort Norman, latitude 65, and has even ripened at Fort Good Hope, close to the Arctic Circle. At this latter height, however, the frost belt comes dangerously near. Barley is sown from Athabasca to Fort Norman about May 20, and is ready for harvesting by

the middle of September. Almost invariably, in normal years, the quality is equal to Ontario's best.

The Mackenzie valley is a mixed farming country, and gives excellent vegetable crops considerably beyond its grain limits. There have been only slight attempts to raise potatoes at Fort Macpherson, which, it must be remembered, is within seventy miles of the Arctic Ocean, but at Fort Good Hope potatoes, cabbages and such-like are grown quite successfully. It may be said, in a general way, that the Arctic Circle is the northernmost limit of farm produce vegetation—but that is saying much, is it not? To know that our agricultural possibilities reach that far point on the map is to size up farming in Canada on a larger scale than has been.

At practically every point between Athabasca and Fort Good Hope are vegetable gardens, the range of crop in which is very much the same as on the down-east farms. Not potatoes and turnips only, but onions, lettuce, peas, rhubarb, and even tomatoes figure on the home-made menus of the people up north. These usually grow to a good size, and are well flavored, though unfavorable conditions in a particular season may give a setback to all the garden stuff. Normally the growth is rapid, prolific and fruitful.

The explanation of all this far-northern vegetation is the excessive long sunlight of the Top Country. In this region of almost all-night days, where there is hardly any darkness, and one day runs into another with scarcely a break between, the sunlight is persistent. Actual records show that at Fort Simpson there are 570 hours of sunlight in June and only twelve hours less in July. Fort Macpherson has 720 hours in June, which means that at that topmost point it's day all the time. In the four months from May to August, there are at Simpson, which may be taken as a fair medium, 2,147 hours of sun, as compared with 1,805 hours at Ottawa. It is little wonder that growth is quick.

There is still another region of the far North that has some agricultural possibilities, though admittedly of a much more doubtful kind. East of the Mackenzie, away over toward Hudson Bay, are two good rivers, the Thelon and Hanbury, flowing through what is known as the Barren Lands, but bordered nevertheless with stretches of timber land and potential farming country. No attempts to farm this country have been made, for it is quite unsettled, and in any case only a very limited degree of agriculture could ever be possible in it.

It is worth noting, however, that the great Arctic prairies around and beyond these two rivers have a productive value in a way of their own. Though they are the so-called Barren Lands, they are barren only in the sense that they are treeless, for immense tracts of their total half-million square miles are covered with a heavy growth of wild grass, to say nothing of flowers and berry patches. Just as the plains of the Peace River and Grand Prairie countries are spread with a rich profusion of native hay, from which abundant crops have been harvested, and upon which thousands of cattle and horses have grazed, so the empty lands to the east are richly spread with as fine a grass crop as can be found in America. Their natural pasture grounds would be the envy of any southern packer, for that vast stretch of hay land would support and fatten almost countless herds of beef cattle. As it is, the caribou or Arctic deer have it all to themselves and roam at will over its limitless plains in bands of sometimes a dozen or two, sometimes many thousands. Even if the cattle raising idea should never prove to be feasible in this great pasture land, the time may not be so very distant when we shall need to draw upon the animal resources it already has to make up our national meat supply. We shall see then, if not sooner, that Canada has little waste or useless land.

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DRASTIC ACTION TO PREVENT PARALYSIS

Drastic precautions are proposed by the Halifax Health Board to prevent infantile paralysis breaking out through children coming there from New York by steam and rail. The board passed a resolution, which will be sent to the Dominion Government immigration department, recommending that every child under 16 years of age going to Halifax or any other Nova Scotian port either by train or

boat be detained from landing for eight days from the date that they last left the district in which the malady is prevalent.

It is not expected that parents will put up with the inconvenience of being isolated for six days at a Nova Scotian port. No cases of infantile paralysis have been discovered in Halifax, and only one death has resulted from the disease in Nova Scotia since the out-break of the epidemic in New York. The health board officers will examine all children arriving from New York.

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