Poultry Raising and Fattening for Export.

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As poultry raising and fattening for export is soon to become one of the leading industries of this country, and it can be put in as a side issue on almost every farm, and can be looked after largely by the boys or girls, there is no reason why almost every farmer cannot arrange to raise and fatten from three to four hundred birds, which would bring a return of from $150 to $200 if properly fattened. There is an increasing demand for Canadian poultry in the British market since the Dominion Government, through the untiring zeal of Prof. Robertson, has arranged an almost perfect system of cold storage, whereby we can land our poultry on the English market in the finest condition possible.

The first important point in starting this industry is to select a suitable breed for the purpose. Almost any of the Asiatic, American or English classes, or crosses of these, do very well for fattening. In April 15th issue illustrations of the correct type to select for this purpose were published. After getting a suitable type, the first essential to secure good fertile eggs is to have a good active male. A great many run off with the idea that one or possibly two males are sufficient for 75 or 100 hens. You cannot make a greater mistake. When your eggs hatch you will wonder why so many have no chicks in them, and you have a lot of rotten or infertile eggs, a great many chicks not being able to break through the shell, and a great many that do manage to get out cannot stand the slightest dampness of cold, but die. An infertile egg will not rot or have an offensive smell though it has been under a hen for 21 days. Rotten eggs are due to the germ having started, and not being strong enough, dies between 5 and 15 days of incubation, largely due to having too many hens to one male. Other causes are very fat hens, feeding soft or stimulating food to force egg production, lack of exercise, inbreeding, very young pullets, and using poor, weakly males. There is no better food to produce good fertile eggs than whole grain with considerable meat scrap or bone meal.

After your chicks are out, do not feed till 24 or 36 hours old, as nature provides for this length of time. A great many chicks are lost or greatly set back by the first week's feeding, as many think that soft food is the proper thing for little chicks, and will soak bread in milk or water, feeding it sloppy and wet, thus causing diarrhœa, which is the greatest trouble among young chicks. There is nothing better than oatmeal fed dry, with a few boiled eggs chopped fine added; this will answer for first week. Second week take half corn meal and oatmeal and mix with sour milk, adding several eggs, and bake in a cake; this crumbled up makes a first class ration. Once a day feed cracked wheat or screenings from wheat or millet seed may be scattered among some chaff or chip dirt; this will keep them busy, and exercise develops the muscles, which is essential for strong birds. If they are confined in coops they relish a little green food of some kind—lettuce or onion tops chopped fine, or a little young clover, answer well. Do not forget to place plenty of fresh water before them at all times, also keep some coarse sand or grit constantly before them. Another important food is meat or bone meal, especially if they are confined where they cannot get any worms or insects. This is essential to insure rapid growth.

A great enemy that young chicks have to contend with is lice; it is almost impossible to force any growth on young chickens if the yhave lice to battle against. Keep plenty of insect powder on hand, and dust the hen quite often, also while the chicks are feeding give them a little sprinkle—a very little is sufficient. Avoid feeding sour or stale feed at all times; never give them more than they will clean up at any time. A great many chickens are stunted by feeding too much grain food. It is just as easy to stunt growing chickens as it is to stunt young pigs. They need oatmeal mixed with other grains largely, as this is one of the best grains for growing chickens; it does not overheat their blood like most heavy grains. At four months old they should be large enough to crate and feed for market.

THE FINISHING PERIOD.

It is useless for any one to think they can fatten poultry properly by letting them run about the yard, as has been commonly done for the local markets. They must be confined in close quarters if you want to get the best results, as by letting them run at large their muscle becomes hard, which toughens the whole bird. Crating is by far the best method to fatten. Crates made 6 or 12 feet long by 20 inches square, with partitions every 2 feet, will hold 4, 5 or 6 birds, according to size, in each division. With a slatted bottom the droppings fall through, which saves a lot of trouble in keeping clean. Another advantage of the crate is that your birds have no room to fight one another; they are always there to take their feed. If it happens to be a little late you can hang up a lantern, and they will eat just as well, where if they were in a pen on roosts they would miss a meal now and then, for you have to feed quite early at night in late fall, or it soon gets too dark, and they won't come down to feed. If you have no crates your next best method is to coop in close quarters. Make a trough so the birds can put their heads through and eat and not get on the feed with their feet. The trough I use is 12 feet long, made V-shaped, of two boards, each 5 inches wide. Over it stands a bottomless box 1 foot high, with slatted sides, through which they put their heads when feeding. Pullets will do fairly well fed in this manner, as they are not as quarrelsome as cockerels. Before putting them in the coops see that they are free from lice; they will not thrive or fatten if infested with lice. Dust well with insect powder—once does. If their legs are rough or scaly, it is caused by a parasite; this gives the bird an old and unhealthy appearance, and a little coal oil or grease will stop this trouble.

THE PROPER FEED

for fattening is one-third finely-ground oats (with hulls out if possible), one-third corn chop, one-third buckwheat, mixed with skim milk to a porridge—not too stiff; one-third shorts may be added in place of corn or buckwheat with good results. It is essential to have the skim milk, as this gives the flesh a creamy-white appearance; it also keeps their blood cool. You must be careful on the start not to stall your birds, or they will go off their feed; give sparingly three times a day for two or three days. Never at any time give them more than they will eat up clean. After three weeks, twice a day will do to feed; for the fourth and fifth weeks, a little tallow should be added—one pound to 60 or 70 birds twice a week. The tallow makes the lean flesh much more juicy. If you are scarce of skim milk, potatoes pulped and boiled and mixed with grain will give good results; the birds relish potatoes, and it makes a cheaper food. If you feed grain alone, their blood soon becomes heated, and they soon start feather-pulling. It is a great mistake to feed whole grain to fatten poultry; you can afford to grind it much cheaper than they can; they will not thrive at all if confined on whole grain. A great many have the idea that you must have a cramming machine to fatten poultry; with it you can force them to fatten in less time, but they will get just about as good in one week longer feeding, unless it be a few poor feeders. The cramming machine means considerably more work, and I do not think it would pay a person feeding a small number to invest in one. I had quite a number last year that weighed 7 and 8 pounds, with no crammer used. There are usually quite a number that are poor feeders which I put on the crammer. A little powdered charcoal added twice a week keeps them in a healthy condition.

POULTRY KILLING

for export must be done in the right manner, as no birds are exported with their heads off. They should be bled in the mouth or have their necks broken. Plucking must be done dry, which can be readily accomplished if commenced as soon as the neck is broken and before the heat leaves the body. If the birds once start to get stiff and cold it is a big task to pluck them. Leave about 3 inches of feathers on top of neck next to head, also a small ring at hock joint. As soon as plucked, draw their legs down alongside their breast by taking a piece of cord, double, and tie two or three toes on one end of loop and draw over back, putting toes of other leg in loop; this should be good and tight, as it gives the bird a much more compact appearance. Then put breast down on shaping board, putting a brick on the back. As soon as the birds have all the heat out of their bodies they should be wrapped in parchment paper and packed in cases and put in cold storage.

RECORD CARD

for the poultry-fattening station at Onondaga. Number of chickens, 27. Weight when placed in crates, 151 pounds. Commenced fattening November 20, 1900. Cost, $9.06. Average cost per chicken, 33⅓ cents.

	Feed Consum'd		Chickens.		
	Lbs. Ground Oats, Shorts & Buckwheat.	Lbs.	Lbs. Weight.	Lbs. Gain.	Remarks.
First week....	18½	Potatoes & Water 129	170	19	Potatoes pulped and boiled, weighed after.
Second week..	16½	Potatoes & Water 126	188½	18½	Same as first week.
Third week...	68	Milk 103	208½	20	Separator milk used, no potatoes; 3 lb. tallow.
Fourth week..	98	Milk 182	231	22½	Crammer used; 4 lbs. tallow.
Fifth week....	Sold				
Totals, Feed and Gain	261½	540	231	80	
Feed consum'd per lb. of Gain in Weight....	3.3	6.7	Average gain in weight per chicken, 3 lbs. Cost of feed per lb. of gain, 4 4c.		

Date of killing, December 20, 1900. Starved before killing, 36 hours. Price realized per pound, 8 cents: per chicken, 68 cents. Remarks—Grain used: ¼ oats (finely ground), ¼ buckwheat, ½ fine shorts. Potato ration much the cheapest.

A New Nest Egg.

AN EASY LICE REMEDY.

While viewing the flock of Barred Rocks belonging to one of the Neepawa poultrymen, we were shown his method of lice prevention, which was to place in each nest three or four moth balls (naphthalene). This poultryman states that the balls are very effective for the purpose intended, in which statement we feel bound to concur, as no self-respecting hen louse will, we believe, stay in the vicinity of such a malodorous atmosphere. Moth balls are cheap, lice are expensive, so place some of the little white spheres in the laying and hatching nests.

The Little Chicks.

The boy who has been strolling 'round,
Comes running in — What has he found?
"Mamma," he says: "Come quick; come quick;—
I'm sure I heard a little chick."

When the little chick comes out of the shell it soon makes its presence known. Yet the little chirper isn't hungry, as some people imagine. It needs nothing but warmth for the first twenty-four hours of its life. We always give ours a hard-boiled egg for their first meal. Afterward, bread crumbs, oatmeal, and plenty of clean water. After they are two weeks old, we give them small wheat, some potatoes, and meat cut up in very small pieces two or three times a week. We keep them in a coop at night. The chickens have a little yard to run around in, where there is plenty of sunshine, but the hen is kept in. We had rather poor success in raising chickens this spring. In the first place, the hens didn't cluck early, and when they did cluck at last, they didn't hatch out nearly as well as usual. We had planned to have some nice flocks of early Plymouth Rocks, but we were disappointed. We set five hens about the same time. As the eggs didn't nearly all hatch, I broke some of them, and found a few dead chickens, but the most of the eggs were rotten. Well, I thought it would never pay to have the hens losing their time caring for a few chicks, so I decided to give them all to one hen and let her mother them. The first one I set had five chickens, so when the others were hatched I put them in the coop all together; but biddie No. 1 rebelled—she didn't want to adopt any children; she began to pick them unmercifully. So I bundled her out and put in No. 2. She acted just the same: flew at the poor little chicks as if to say, "Get out, you miserable interlopers, you don't belong to me and you shan't stay here with my youngsters." So I served her the same way as No. 1; but she wanted her own chickens, and nearly went wild when she was taken from them. She kept flying up against the coop for a while, then she would call the chickens to come to her. Then I placed her in solitary confinement for a few days. I then took No. 3, a quiet, motherly hen, and put her in the coop. She warmly welcomed her large family of foster children by taking them under her wings, though it wasn't easy for them all to get under. She seemed quite proud of her large family. She has taken good care of them, and I never before saw chickens grow so fast. They are large, healthy Plymouth Rocks. When I let the hen out of prison, that grieved so much over the loss of her little family, she went straight back to her nest. I had taken the eggs away that didn't hatch, but she didn't mind that. She seemed determined to stay there until she got another brood. I wondered how it would do to set her again. I thought perhaps she wouldn't sit the three weeks. But when I found her so persistent, I made a new nest for her in the same place, dusted her with sulphur, and gave her 14 eggs. That was just two weeks ago, and she has been sitting well ever since. I set another hen about the same time, so intend to reward this patient, persevering mother by giving her the other brood too, if she will take them. It would be too bad to rob her again after sitting so long.

Many people are complaining of eggs hatching poorly. One of our neighbors set three hens, and only had eight chickens. I think that the cause of failure was that the *eggs were not fertile*. Perhaps some of the readers of the ADVOCATE have had a similar experience, and can throw some light on the subject. I consider the exchange of thoughts and ideas, the experience of farmers and their wives, very helpful and interesting. One knows something another does not, and thus by carefully reading the experiences of others, each of us can be continually adding to our store of knowledge. A. R.

[NOTE.—Poor hatching has been generally complained of this spring even among expert poultry fanciers where the care given has been the best known. While it may be difficulty to arrive at a just conclusion as to the cause of the trouble in all cases, the following causes are blamed: Too many females to one male, too close confinement during winter and spring, and a heavy laying season during the winter months. A. R. attributes the poor hatch to non-fertility, and states that many eggs were rotten, while a few had dead chicks. We would point out, however, that non-fertile eggs do not rot with three weeks' sitting; they do dry up a little, so that they will shake in the shell, but the contents are not putrefied, but smell fresh and appear as fresh eggs when broken. Some go so far as to consider them fit to use for cooking after being in an incubator or under a hen two or three weeks. EDITOR F. A.]