



POULTRY

Raising Chickens

The expert poultryman who raises chickens upon a large scale may perhaps find it profitable to use incubators and brooders, etc., for the purpose of hatching and rearing his chicks, but these machines need careful management and after all it is more than doubtful whether the proportion of chickens raised to eggs set is as great as can be realized by trusting to nature and the old hen. The general experience seems to be that for the farmer the hen is the best.

Whether the chickens to be raised are intended for winter layers, or the poultry market, it is well to get as many as possible early in the season; not too early or they will be too troublesome to be profitable. Chickens hatched from the first to the fifteenth of May should develop into cockerels and pullets which will answer both purposes readily. Pullets hatched at that time, if of the right strain, should commence to lay the November following and the

fed and watered close to the nest. If after feeding she returns to the nest of her own free will the real eggs may be given her and everything will proceed regularly. The hen should be provided with food, water and a dust bath of dry earth or, better still, coal ashes, and plenty of coarse grit for digestive purposes near by, and if she is alone she may be left to her own discretion. If, however, there are a number of hens sitting in one building, it is better to have the hens in closed coops and allow them all to come out and feed once each day at the same time, after they have fed, etc., returning them to their proper nests and closing them up again. Some hens will only leave their nests to feed every other day. Should that be their desire, allow them to have their own way about it, but sometimes when they do this they are inclined when off to stay too long away from their eggs and so in the early season causing them to be chilled.

The day before the chickens are hatched dust the hen and nest well with prethrum powder. The chicks should then be free from vermin.

On the day the chicks are due and while they are emerging from the eggs, leave the hen and nest alone; more harm than good is always done by interference at that time, particularly if the hen is irritable and not accustomed to being handled.

The morning after they are hatched the hen will bring off her chicks. They will then require to be fed. The best food for them during the first week of their lives is rolled oats or cracked wheat. Do not feed them moist food and do not feed them milk in any form at this season. More young chickens are killed in this way than in any other. Pure water should be provided for them in shallow vessels; if the drinking pan are deep enough to wet their feathers when they get into them, the silly little things will contrive to drown themselves or get chilled to death.

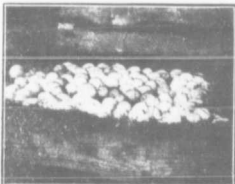
It is a good plan where possible to sit several hens on the same day, so that in the event of some of them only producing small broods, the chickens may be put together and given to a few of the hens, in the proportion of about fifteen to a hen in the early part of the season and twenty later on. This may quite readily be done if the chicks

are placed under the hen with which they are to stay after dark. If strange chicks are given to a hen in the daytime she will refuse to adopt them and may kill them. If the hens are to be confined, the coops should have board floors, for if placed over bare earth the hens will scratch and dig and in doing so kill several chickens.

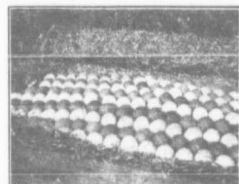
Weed Seeds for Poultry

It is sometimes supposed that screenings, weed seeds and trash of various kinds will form cheap, and, therefore, profitable feed for poultry. The result of experiment shows that this is a fallacy. Undoubtedly fowls when at large do eat quantities of weed seeds, but this diet must be supplemented with more nourishing food or disaster will result.

To test the value of this food for poultry we selected some twenty odd individual, healthy birds. The birds were weighed individually and divided into five groups of four each. One group was fed ground weed seeds and milk; another fed ground weed seeds and water; another fed ground weed seeds and whey; another fed half cornmeal and half weed seeds and sour milk; and another fed half refuse shredded wheat biscuit and



A carelessly packed case of eggs exhibited at the show of the Royal Dublin Society



A well packed case of uniform eggs, exhibited at the show of the Royal Dublin Society.

cockerels can be used as the markets require them.

There is sometimes a difficulty in obtaining broody hens early in the season, particularly when Plymouth Rocks or Wyandottes are kept, and, of course, always when any of the now sitting breeds form the stock. The writer has found a few half-bred Brahmas useful as early mothers. If well fed on corn, hempseed and other stimulating food, birds of this class will readily become broody very early in the season. Half-bred Brahmas are preferable to pure-breds for this purpose, because they are not heavily feathered on the legs and are, therefore, less clumsy with their feet. They are usually remarkably gentle, permitting any amount of handling, and are rarely quarrelsome.

It is best to make the nests for setting hens in some quiet place, away from the rest of the fowls, where they will not be disturbed. If possible, they should be made upon the ground, the materials being short straw, chaff or, best of all, lawn cuttings, saved for that purpose from the autumn previous. If the nests are made in boxes, it is well to put a layer of fresh earth, or a thin sod turned grass side down, on the bottom and place the straw on that; powder the nest with prethrum or flour of sulphur before putting in the eggs and also powder the hen well amongst her feathers, and there will then be no trouble with vermin. Having placed the nest in some quiet spot where nothing can disturb the hen, put in it a few artificial eggs, then after dark place the hen on it and shut her up. By noon the next day she will have settled down quietly; she may then be let out and



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