

Poultry.

Poultry Items for the Farmer.

BY R. A. BROWN, CHERRY GROVE, ONT.

Proper feed for chickens and all young poultry will make them grow fast.

We have been trying all kinds of food and fixtures. When a chick just emerges from the shell, hard boiled eggs or bread wet and crumbled finely are the best food for a few days; after a week or two they may be fed on a mixture of ground wheat screenings, corn meal, and whole buckwheat, or whole wheat screenings added, and enough fresh water to slightly dampen this mixture, I have found this to be the best food for chicks and all young growing fowl from a week old up to full grown. I always mix fresh twice each day. I feed in a long trough which is placed in front of their coops on the grass, which I have placed out at a distance from all buildings and fences, in order to be free from rats and other vermin which are to be feared.

Always keep fresh water near, as all poultry like to get a drink immediately after eating; especially ducks and goslings will take a few mouthfuls of food and then of water, so it is necessary to have sufficient water troughs handy by.

Young turkeys want to be carefully watched and given extra feed now, just when shooting the red, as that is the most critical period of their lives. Sometimes at that stage of their lives, if neglected, they will die off by scores and the owner does not know what is the matter. Such are at the age of puberty, and need twice the care and feed for about two weeks, after which they may be allowed to roam over the fields in search of insects at their own "sweet will"; but all should be looked after every night and well fed before going to roost, the same when coming off in the morning.

Old hens want fresh water once or twice each day, and require it more now than in winter; this hot weather all fowls get thirsty the same as any other animals; but hens that are laying require more water than when they are idle, for there is nearly one third of an egg made up of water, so do not expect hens to lay eggs when composed so much of this element on dry rations of small wheat or dry corn. Eggs are a good price; this year they have never been lower than 12 cents per dozen in St. Mary's, and are now eagerly sought after at 15 cents. I presume that markets are equally as good everywhere in Ontario. It will not pay for the farmer to put his fowls on short rations. The better hens are fed the better they will lay, and be of more profit to their owners. Young chicks ought to be well looked after and pushed ahead; there is going to be a good demand for them this season; the prices are higher now than they have been for a number of years before at this season of the year.

Those intending to exhibit any poultry this fall had better commence now to make the little combs grow to large ones by extra feed. Keep them healthy by keeping their apartments neat and clean.

Selection of Breeders.

There is much in the selection of the cock for breeding purposes; the quality and the proper number of hens to be given the cock are very important matters to consider.

To breed good fowls of any of our improved breeds is no child's play, but on the contrary requires study, skill and close observation. The cock, in all cases, should be a model of his class, of good size, perfectly healthy, bold and lively, clean made, with close, glossy plumage and a bright eye. He should be broad-breasted, his thighs muscular and firm, should carry himself with a proud yet graceful air, and exhibit the distinctive characters of the breed to which he belongs.

The good qualities of the hens, whether intended for laying or breeding, are of no less importance than those of the cock. They should be chosen to combine generous size, color even and pure, of good constitution and symmetrical form. From among their product, select the best pointed and most perfect in general characteristics for future breeding, and you will be largely successful, as a rule, in the end.

Hints to Amateurs.

Every spring and fall a large number begin rearing poultry. Some try one breed and some another, but in this respect taste generally dictates which kind to get.

We admire the young poulterer who is governed by taste in the choice of poultry stock. It is much better and safer than picking up fowls in a hap-hazard way. Taste is usually accompanied with a love for fowls, and every experienced person knows that a real love for the birds you keep is a great element of success, for the kind and loving keeper is always zealous for the well-being of his stock, and will not wilfully neglect them, though he may injudiciously feed them.

Begin in spring or fall, but begin slowly and surely at first and learn by degrees the art of caring and feeding; and when these are mastered, if you have suitable accommodations, you may increase your stock. We advise you to make the keeping of poultry a secondary pursuit in the beginning, until you have every reason to know and show that you have found in it a more agreeable, pleasurable and better-paying occupation than the one you first followed.

Begin with good breeding stock, although you may have to pay a big price for it. You must remember that this is like putting your money to good interest. As you get started, their care or keeping will cost you no more than if keeping common stock, and the profits from the sale or use of the eggs, besides the value of their progeny, either for ornament or utility, is much more than from the best of the common sorts.

Veterinary.

Urticaria—Nettle-rash in Horses—Surfeit.

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Among the skin eruptions of horses, none is more sudden in its appearance, and to the inexperienced more threatening, than the so-called *nettle-rash*, or *surfeit*. Though it may occur at any season, yet summer is the season *par excellence* of its development, mainly because this is the time when abrupt and extreme changes in food are made, and when the system generally is relaxed by the heat, and the tone of the digestive organs and the powers of digestion are more or less impaired. A suggestion of this last named cause—lack of appetite and tone—is obtained from the habit of feeding stock in winter. If the cold is steady and even, the appetite is good, more food is consumed, and more flesh is gained in a given time. If, on the contrary, a *cold spell* is succeeded by a *thaw*, or if these two conditions frequently alternate with each other, appetite fails, the digestion is impoverished, the food remains uncared-for in the manger, and the gain is but slight. The failure is not altogether due to the heat, inasmuch as that in the steady warm weather of summer cattle on rich pasture will gain steadily and rapidly, and the more so that there is less outlay for the maintenance of animal heat. It is the sudden transition rather than the mildness of the season that makes the difference. The power of bearing heat or cold is to a large extent a question of habit. If the animal system has been exposed for a length of time continuously to a certain temperature, be it high or low, its habits or powers accommodate themselves to that temperature, and it can resist its evil effects with far greater certainty than if suddenly exposed to this temperature from the extreme opposite one. William Edward's experiments on frogs in winter and summer showed that when subjected to the same low temperature in winter and summer respectively, the heat of the body was lowered further by several degrees in the latter season than in the former. The same cause operates upon man and beast alike in producing the general *malaise*, or *spring fever*, so common on the return of mild weather. True, in

animals there is the additional disturbance attendant on the shedding of the winter coat and the growth of the new, which makes a severe drain on the system, and renders the skin specially sensitive and irritable. Nor should we forget the effect of a thaw or sudden rise of temperature in setting free frozen or chilled organic matter, in passing it into putrefactive fermentation, and developing hurtful gases, that lower vitality and undermine health. In a summer like the present, when great heats alternate with unusual cold, most of these conditions operate with unwonted effect, and the systems of men and animals are laid open to diseases of various kinds to an unusual extent.

With these preliminary considerations we are prepared to comprehend how slight changes of diet and irregularities of digestion should at times induce such alterations in the blood, and secretions of the skin, as will give rise to inflammation and eruption. Very many diseases of the skin, which are more tardy in their development and more persistent, are directly connected with indigestion, and are only to be cured by correcting the function of the stomach. These are mostly connected with persistent mistakes in diet or work, but in *urticaria* it is the sudden extreme and transient change of diet, work or temperature that produces the speedy derangement.

A change from dry feeding to grass, or above all to soiling with green clover, rye, corn, esparcet, alfalfa, &c.—a sudden change of diet to new hay or oats, to grasses run to seed but not yet fully matured nor cured—to partially ripened tares,—will often lead to such disorders as produce the sudden skin eruption.

The subject becomes somewhat feverish, the temperature is raised, the mouth gets to be dry and clammy, and there appear on different parts of the body swellings varying in size from a bean to a walnut, standing out abruptly from the skin, and not gradually sloping off to the sound integument, as in ordinary inflammation. When handled these swellings are only slightly tender, and are felt to make one body with the skin, neither standing out on its surface nor rolling beneath. When very extensive many run together into one great patch, so that the whole side of the chest or abdomen, the thicker portions of the limbs, or the head and neck, may have the skin increased to an inch in thickness. When this happens to the head, the swelling of the lids may close the eyes, the thickening of the nostrils may threaten suffocation, or that of the lips may render it impossible to take in food or even to drink without the greatest difficulty. These swellings are often as evanescent as those of *nettle-rash* in the human subject, and may appear, disappear and reappear in the course of a single day.

The prevention of this affection consists mainly in avoiding the sudden changes of diet, in withholding all partially ripened but imperfectly cured hay and grain, in making all necessary changes by slow degrees, to allow the system to habituate itself to the new food, and in special care at the seasons of moulting and growth of hair.

Treatment consists first in the clearing out from the bowels of any irritant food by a smart purgative, as 5 drachms Barbadoes aloes, or 1 lb. glauher salts, and following this up with teaspoonful doses of carbonates of potassa or soda, repeated morning and night. To improve the lost tone, the following may also be administered twice a day:—Powdered gentian, $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.; powdered nux vomica, 10 grains; sulphate of iron, two drachms. As a rule the swellings will disappear as soon as the physic affects the system, and even before the bowel evacuations become loose and copious; yet there is left a susceptibility and lack of tone of the stomach and skin, that is best corrected by the employment of the second prescription.

It is, of course, all-important to thoroughly correct the diet, with a view of the immediate and permanent relief, as otherwise all medicinal measures will prove futile. A few soft bran mashers are often useful until the lost tone of the stomach has been restored, after which the horse may be returned to sound oats and hay, or more gradually to grass.