

## Care of the Poultry Breeding Stock

By T. A. WILLIAMS

This is the time for the practical poultry raiser to get his flock into good order for the coming hatching season. Many farmers have birds that have done little or no laying this winter. Separate the pullets from the old hens, and mate them up as two distinct yards, mating a yearling or two-year-old cock to the pullets, and a well developed cockerel to the old hens.

I am taking it for granted that your birds are pure-breds, but if they are not, you will still need to follow the same course, and in addition you must do some very severe weeding if you wish to grow chicks that will turn out good common fowls.

Just here allow me to remark that I cannot understand how any progressive farmer will keep a lot of mongrel fowls around the place when it costs no more to keep thoroughbreds, they are more profitable, harder, and, in addition, are ornamental instead of being an eye-sore, as mongrels always are. However, if you have the latter kind of stock, select twelve or fourteen of the brightest, most sprightly looking birds that conform most nearly to the Leghorn type. If you will now procure a pure-bred White or Brown Leghorn rooster and mate him with these birds you will secure good layers for next season. I say a White or Brown Leghorn, it will make very little difference which, as your females are of all the colors of the rainbow and of no fixed type, consequently their progeny will be only mongrels, but the Leghorn blood in them will greatly improve their laying qualities.

If, on the other hand, your birds are not of the Leghorn type, but are heavier fowl, you can do no better than to mate them to a Brahma, Cochon, Plymouth Rock, or Wyandotte cockerel, and my choice would be in the order named; while I would not prefer Rocks or Wyandottes bred pure, to Brahmas or Cochons, yet, for crossing, I would prefer either of the latter, as they are more prepotent, and they transmit the good qualities and traits of their breed much more surely than Plymouth Rocks or Wyandottes when mated with mongrels, for the reason that Rocks and Wyandottes are themselves of composite origin. Having mated your birds, put them where they can remain until the hatching season is over. Remember, if you remove a hen to strange quarters, she stops laying, and this you must avoid, particularly at this season of the year.

Feed enough good grain to keep them in good condition, but not fat. I do not like soft feed for breeding stock. Give them a cabbage or a mangold wurzel twice a week, scatter their grain in the barn litter, which should be six inches deep in their pen, so that they will have to work for every grain. This is the way to get them in good breeding condition. Remember a hen that loses around all day is never any good either as layer or breeder; work is beneficial for poultry as well as for ourselves. See that they have a plentiful supply of fresh water at all times, your fowls require it as much as you do, also provide them with a box of good, sharp gravel, not lake gravel, as that is always worn smooth and round. You will start them laying sooner and greatly improve the fertility of the egg if you give them a little fresh meat or cut beef bone two or three times a week. Clean up the droppings from under the roosts at least three times a week, and better if done daily.

Gather the eggs as soon as possible after they are laid, remember, if they get chilled they will be no good for

hatching, and if frozen and the shell burst, they are no good for sale. Eggs that are being saved for hatching should be kept at a temperature of about 45 degrees or 50 degrees Fah. Lay them on their side in a box or basket, on a little chaff or bran, and cover loosely with a piece of flannel or old blanket. It is best to turn them once a day.

Eggs can be hatched when a month old if kept in this way, but I prefer to have them not more than ten days or two weeks old.

Your birds must be able to get out of doors every day when not too stormy, but do not allow them to stand around on ice or snow; they must have litter of some sort to scratch in, and this is best in an open shed adjoining their pen. Fowls deprived of oxygen are delicate, sickly and useless either as layers or breeders, but remember, while they must have plenty of fresh air, they must be protected from the cold winter winds and snow storms. Now is the time for you to decide whether you will sell your eggs this spring at fifteen cents a dozen, or convert them into chicks at a profit to you of \$2.86 per dozen. We have told in former issues of *The Farming World* how this may be done; remember, you can do it as well as anybody else, and if you do it once you will keep on doing it. It is a very simple matter to hatch chickens

or ducklings artificially, provided you have a good incubator, but remember that incubators are like all other goods in this respect, the best ones are not sold at the lowest price. If you buy an incubator, set it up and run it for two or three days before you put the eggs in it, don't put the eggs in before you thoroughly understand how to regulate the machine, or you will be in all probability spoil the lot by overheating them. Don't throw the manufacturer's instructions in the fire and undertake to run the machine according to your own ideas. You may be a very smart fellow, but, remember, the maker of the machine probably knows more about it than you do. A great many eggs are wasted every year by being set under hens or in incubators, without knowing whether they are fertile or not. Every poultry raiser should know beyond a doubt whether his eggs are fertile, or not before setting any considerable number of them, and they should be stronger, fertile, as nothing else will produce the vigorous male and female offspring. Until your eggs get in this condition, it will pay much better to market them. The only way to determine whether they are in fit condition for hatching is to put a dozen or so under a setting hen or in an incubator; on the seventh day they may be safely tested even by an amateur, when held before a lamp in a dark room, shading the egg with the hands, the fertile ones will appear dark, while the unfertile ones are clear as a new laid egg. These should be discarded.

## In the Dairy

### Objections to Fodder Cheese

Once more the Montreal Produce Merchants' Association, which specially represents the export trade in cheese and butter, has recorded its objections to the manufacture of fodder cheese. In a circular recently issued to dairymen, it says:

"The amount of cheese manufactured in Canada last year reached the large total of 2,000,000 boxes, being about 50,000 boxes over the previous year. This was largely owing to the excessive manufacture of fodder cheese in March and April, and November and December. The uncertainty of the extent and time of the manufacture of these fodders, together with the inferior quality produced, tends to depress the market, creates a lowering of values, and affects the prices obtainable during the whole of the summer season. The opinion of this Association is that it is strongly in the interests of dairymen that the manufacture of cheese should not commence before May 1st, and should close not later than November 15th. If this is done, a steadier market will result, and a better average price will be obtained. The question of what to do with the surplus milk during the seasons referred to, is easily settled by the manufacture of butter. By giving closer attention than heretofore to the requirements of the trade in butter, the quality would be very much improved, and we should soon gain a reputation and quick market for goods made during the winter and early spring months. Most profitable use could be made of the skim milk for the feeding of stock.

"The prospects for a profitable manufacture of butter have never been brighter than they are this season. The exportation of butter from Russia, which is assuming large proportions, will probably be much curtailed by the war between that country and Japan, and this fact, together with the firm advices from England, should bring about higher prices in the near future, with the present good home trade de-

mand, producers of choice creamery butter will find prices profitable this spring. The stock of cheese in Great Britain and Canada, is now almost double that of last year, and if many fodders are made, it is bound to result in phenomenally low prices during the coming season."

### Guelph Dairy School Notes

In addition to the regular dairy school work for February the class has had the pleasure of Mrs. Nettleton's instruction in Cheshire cheese-making. While yet too new to try, the cheese looked very nice and the students were much interested. The yield of cheese is about 1 pound per 100 pounds of milk greater by following the Cheshire method as compared with the Cheddar system. The main features, as distinct from the Cheddar, are, cooking at a lower temperature (94 d.), retaining more moisture in the curd, developing less acid, salting lightly (2½ lbs. per 1,000 lbs. curd), light pressure for two or three days, ironing the outside of the cheese with a common flat iron, and pasting the bandage on the outside of the cheese after pressing.

The second term examination took place on February 25th.

We regret that several of our best students have been offered lucrative positions, which they were obliged to accept at once in order to obtain them. Our students are being sought after, especially on the American side of the line. Nearly all men open for engagement have been applied for. Very few are now left who are not engaged for next season, and applications for more are coming in nearly every day.

The term closes March 25th. This will be followed by a ten days' course for instructors and experienced makers by April 5-15. Only men of three or more years' experience will be admitted, and the class will be limited to thirty. Special work in bacteriology and chemistry will be given. H. H. DEAN.