

CORRESPONDENCE

Practical Poultry Keeping

Valuable Hints — Government Money Not Wisely Spent

To the Editor of FARMING:

I am pleased that you are trying to arouse interest among your readers in regard to poultry keeping. I believe that every farmer may make it a profitable part of his business if he will devote to it the same care he bestows upon his other farm departments, and is willing to spend the small sum necessary for a suitable house and good stock. Without these requisites he is not working on a correct basis and cannot hope to be successful.

Poultry writers and the editors of agricultural papers have rung all the changes on this subject during the last few years, and had farmers given it the recognition that it deserves poultry culture would be much in advance of what it now is. All other branches of agriculture receive their due share of attention from our agricultural educators, but so far we have had very little in the way of object lessons upon the rearing of market fowl, or egg production. I was particularly impressed with the fact that in the list of Farmers' Institute speakers that I saw, not one was mentioned as taking up poultry work. In my opinion the farmer should be taught how to raise chickens before he is taught how to fatten them. We have yet to learn how much profit accrued to the farmers who raised the large chickens at fifty cents per pair for the experiment, conducted with a view to securing the British market. *There is no profit* in feeding chickens for six months or until they weigh from six to eight pounds per pair and selling them at fifty cents. And if the farmers rear their chicks at this price, selling them to others to fatten, or even if he fattens them himself as he does turkeys, a large slice of the profit is taken up by middlemen.

Mr. Ruddin mentions 14c. (if I remember correct'y) as the probable price in England if large quantities were put on the market. That there is quite a respectable margin between the rearing of chickens and fattening them and the price to be paid in England, I believe; but the farmer is not going to benefit by it unless he gets more than fifty cents a pair for birds suitable for finishing. It is an open question if the farmer will not do better to keep a good flock of selected layers, give them reasonable care in a comfortable house, with the object of securing the greatest number of winter eggs possible, raise a sufficient number of chickens to replace the old hens with pullets as required, and let the surplus stock go to the best buyer whether for home consumption or a foreign market.

If the farmers were alive to their interest in this matter they would demand of the Provincial Government that a large share of the money now voted to a few fanciers under the name of the Provincial Poultry Association, be applied to the furtherance of the *utility poultry interests among farmers and breeders of utility standard bred fowls*, thus encouraging the rearing of "better poultry and more of it" by the farmers. They are the people who should benefit by this grant instead of a few fanciers with their strings of bantams or some other equally useless exhibit. The Guelph Fat Stock Show offered prizes this season that should put to shame the miserable awards of the Ontario Poultry Association.

Ques. (1) As to how many birds might be kept on an average depends upon the purpose in view, viz., the rearing of market fowl or the production of eggs. If the former, a few breeding birds would be sufficient to raise a large number of chickens, but a much larger number would be required if eggs in any quantity were wanted. But, generally speaking, seventy-five hens, three breeding ducks and five breeding turkeys are as many as are likely to be properly attended to. Geese as usually raised and pastured with farm stock are not profitable.

(2) White Leghorns are ahead of all other breeds for egg production, considering both size and number of eggs. For fattening, Rocks and Wyandottes lead in size and early maturity for feed consumed.

(3) No. Without a proper house and care they are invariably kept at a loss.

(4) Probably he could not grow all the feed. He might find it more profitable to buy suitable foods for the compounding of a proper ration for the purpose as many of our best farmers do when fattening other farm stock.

(5) After deducting expense of food at market prices the farmer might easily realize \$150 yearly from poultry.

(6) Not until he knows more than he does at present regarding the work will the average farmer be able to successfully fatten poultry for the British market.

Cobourg, Ont., Nov. 30th, 1899.

R. C. ALLAN.

The General Purpose Fowl

To the Editor of FARMING:

Your enquiry to hand, and in reply I will try and answer your questions to the best of my ability.

(1) How many fowls, including turkeys, geese, ducks, etc., might be kept on the average farm without interfering with farm work? About 100 fowls and trios of turkeys, geese and ducks for breeding purposes.

(2) What kind of fowls would be most profitable for the farmer? For egg production, Redcaps, Leghorns, Minorcas, and Hamburgs. For fattening purposes, Wyandottes, Plymouth Rocks, and Indian Games. Dorkings are also very good.

(3) Can fowls be profitably kept without a proper hen-house? Yes, but it pays to have a good house, for, like other stock, they require attention.

(4) In fattening poultry would the average farmer be able to produce all the feed required on his farm? Yes, on a farm we try to raise about 100 to 150 chicks and 25 to 40 turkeys, and about 15 geese and as many ducks, and feed the refuse grain we have to spare.

(5) What would be a fair income for a farmer to realize every year from his poultry? About \$175 to \$225; that is, if properly managed.

We do think if farmers would go into raising poultry they would realize more for the money invested than for any other stock on a farm. Our experience is that a general purpose fowl is the best for the farmer. We would prefer the Wyandottes, as they are better layers than the Plymouth Rocks, and are not so apt to set. We have Wyandotte pullets laying at four months and a half old.

Wolverton, Ont., Nov. 11th, 1899. R. & A. LAURIE.

Farm Implement Feature Praised

It Should Appear every Week instead of Once a Month

To the Editor of FARMING:

The farm implement feature of FARMING is a splendid idea and a long felt want. You are certainly to be congratulated, Mr. Editor, on being the very first editor in Canada and the United States to introduce such a feature in American agricultural journalism. Farmers are dependent upon improved agricultural implements just now as much as they are for the seed they put in the ground. Farm help is scarce and dear, and in these days of improved farm appliances only skilled labor is profitable. Hitherto it was not possible for any farm hand to become proficient in the use of intricate machinery, as there was no avenue for the tyro to learn about their use. Now with a department in FARMING explaining the function and working of the newest farm implements, our farmers who are subscribers (and who but should be a subscriber to Canada's only weekly agricultural paper?) can have an opportunity of learning the use and practical working of the many labor-saving implements adapted to work on the farm. I notice that you only expect to have this department appear once a month. If you will pardon me for the suggestion, I would say let this department appear in every issue, for no department of your paper will elicit more interest.

Hermanville, P.E.I.

J. A. MACDONALD.