

THE PROPER FOOD FOR LAYING STOCK.

In the cold weather of winter a warm meal in the morning is necessary to start and keep up a steady supply of eggs. A good plan is to throw all the waste of the kitchen, in the shape of scraps, pieces of bread, uneaten vegetables, &c., into a pot; heat up in the morning till nearly boiling, and then mix bran, provender, shorts, or whatever is most abundant or cheap on the farm, into a hot mess, dusting in a small quantity of red pepper before mixing. Let the mixture stand for a few minutes until the meal is near cooked; then feed in a clean trough, with laths over it, to keep the hens from jumping in and fouling or wasting the feed in their eager anxiety. Feed only enough of this soft stuff to barely satisfy, never enough to gorge. When a hen has had so much food that she will go into a corner and mope, she has had too much, and if the overfeeding is continued will soon cease to lay. The laying hens are the active ones. If food is given at noon, it should be oats, and scattered among the litter on the floor. This meal should be light. The last feed in the afternoon should be generous. Each hen should be sent to roost with a full crop to carry her over the long night. Green food, in the shape of vegetables, usually grown on every farm, will be relished by the layers. Cabbages, turnips, carrots are generally the most convenient. Small potatoes boiled and mixed with provender or bran is a good change for the morning meal. Some of the above named vegetables should always be in the pens of the layers. There is no danger of their eating too much. Red clover hay steamed, chopped and mixed with bran, and given while hot, is one of the healthiest foods for the morning meal. Meat in some shape must be given at least twice a week, to furnish blood-making

material. Hens fed on meat lay well. If given no meat the hens will eat their eggs and pick feathers from one another. In cold weather warm the grain feed.

WHAT QUANTITY TO FEED.

Experience will teach the "happy medium" in feeding. It is desirable to feed well, but not so much as to make the hens too fat. And here the advantage of having small colonies of fowls, where different breeds are kept, will be evident, for what would be generous and stimulating diet for Leghorns, Minorcas and others of the Spanish family, would be too fattening for Plymouth Rocks or Brahmas. As before stated, give enough to keep the hens active. When meat is given, it is not necessary to give so much grain. For instance, if meat is fed at noon it will be only necessary to scatter a few handfuls of oats in each pen to keep the inmates at work. When a hen becomes too fat she will lay soft-shelled eggs. Where plenty of meat is to be had as one of the cheapest articles of food a greater quantity of oats may be given. Wheat is the best all round food. The waste of the farm in conjunction with meat and the hot morning meal and exercise will bring plenty of eggs.

WHAT SORT OF FOWLS TO HAVE.

Beyond question, the best all-round fowl for the farmer is the Plymouth Rock. The best two breeds are the Plymouth Rock and the white Leghorn, for the reason, as the tables published in a preceeding part of the report proves, that the Plymouth Rocks put on flesh more rapidly, and the white Leghorn lays more eggs than any other of the Standard breeds. Closely following come the Wyandottes as an early flesh producer and layer. Then follow the Brahmas, but they are slower in development. Another advantage in keeping Plymouth Rocks

and Leghorns is, that while the Plymouth Rock hens are hatching chickens, after laying all winter, the Leghorns (being non-sitters) will go on laying, and pay the expense incurred while the other breed is sitting. The common barn door fowl is a good winter layer when not too old nor too inbred. Where a farmer has a large number of mixed fowls, and he does not care to get rid of them, he can do a great deal to improve the state of things by procuring a thoroughbred cock or cockerel, and breeding from him.

HOW TO BREED.

If his fowls are large he should get hold of a Leghorn, Minorca or Andalusian male; if small he should place a Plymouth Rock, Brahma or Wyandotte male among his fowls. It is best to breed from a certain number of his best fowls. By observation he will soon find out which are his best layers, and those he should breed from, and so a flock of good layers will be produced. A hen is at her best at two years of age. She does not lay so many eggs in her third year, and after that should be disposed of, unless of extraordinary worth as a breeder. One of the greatest drawbacks to a farmer keeping poultry successfully is that he allows his fowls to inbreed from year to year, until they are so reduced in size as to be unfit for table use, and their laying qualities are things of the past.

VICES.

Two of the worst vices which fowls, in confinement are given to, are egg eating and feather pulling. The first is caused by being kept in too great numbers in limited quarters; a craving for animal food; the nests not being dark enough, and the eggs exposed to view in consequence; the male bird being among the layers, and breaking an egg; hens laying soft-shelled eggs. The second vice is caused by the absence of blood food, such as meat;