

## POULTRY.

(Under this heading, all questions relating to poultry will be answered.)

SINCE the duty has been taken off eggs, the price is fifteen cents per dozen for 200 dozen lots. This is quite a come down from our former prices of thirty to fifty cents, and must strike our old time farmers pretty hard.

The wide awake, progressive poultry man, however, is equal to the emergency, and immediately looks around for ways and means to offset the reductions in receipts. He sees at once that he can't afford to pay two cents a pound and upwards for his grain, and, if he is contiguous to town, he can make a big reduction in his feed bill by obtaining the scraps, etc., from the large hotels. If he is too far from town to do this, or if he doesn't keep enough fowls to make it an object for him to obtain the scraps, he must look about for another feed store from which to get his grain at hard time prices, and, if he is a wise man, he will consult our advertising columns.

A subscriber asks us to give the points of the White Plymouth Rock, and to give him the address of some reliable breeder of that variety. In answer, we can say that the White Plymouth Rock is fully the equal if not the superior of the Barred, the only point in difference being the white plumage, which is an advantage for marketing purposes, and the extra hardness and quicker growth of the white variety. In regard to the latter part of the question, we make it a rule never to recommend any particular breeder to a customer, but can safely refer him to our advertising columns with the knowledge that he will be fairly treated.

The Nanaimo fanciers are importing quite a lot of birds of different breeds. We have seen some of them in the express office, and while we don't wish to discourage our Nanaimo friends, yet we are convinced that they could have got better stock from local fanciers. But, then, "distance lends enchantment."

We saw some newly hatched Brown Leghorn chicks from the cock and hen that won first prize at Nanaimo. A friend who was with us vowed he could see the striping on the saddle already, but, then, he wore glasses.

A meeting of the poultry and pet stock association of Vancouver was held on Saturday. The constitution and by-laws were passed. An effort will be made to retain the services of first class exhibition judges at an early date.

## TESTING EGGS (Continued.)

A clear egg, after merely a week's incubation, is quite up to the average eating quality of what are known as market eggs—not fit perhaps for breakfast, but fit enough for cooking purposes. We prefer to keep them for the chicken food during the first day or two, but there is really no reason why they should not be used for human food.

A fertile egg, when tested about the

eight day, presents a very different appearance to an unfertile one. About three parts of it are quite opaque, and do not allow any rays of light to pass through. The degree of development differs a good deal, some eggs being quite opaque at the eighth day, while others are not more than half so. It may be that the embryo has developed four or five days, and then died. In this case the egg presents a merely clouded appearance throughout, quite unlike that of an egg containing a living embryo. It is not well for young beginners to try to do too much, and they should at first confine their efforts to removing the clear eggs, merely marking those as to which they are doubtful for a second examination. If by the fourteenth day they still present the same cloudy appearance, they may be removed.

An egg is frequently said to be addled when it would more properly be described as rotten. A genuine rotten egg is one in which the process of development of the embryo itself has proceeded for a few days and it has then died. The heat of the hatching process causes decomposition to speedily set in; foul gases are generated, and in the end, such eggs sometimes burst, with results disastrous to the nest if they happen to be in it, or still more disastrous to the poultry keeper if he happens to have one of them in his hand at the time of the explosion. An addled egg, on the contrary, is one which, to the best of our belief, there is no true development of the germ or embryo at all, but merely a false development of the membrane surrounding the germ. Blood vessels are formed, but as there is no proper circulation set up, these vessels soon become ruptured, and a line of blood, usually in an oval form, becomes attached to the lining membrane of the shell.

We have referred to the Aylesbury duckers testing the eggs at a very early period. With a little experience the fertile can readily be distinguished from the unfertile after forty-eight hours' incubation. By that time the germ will have so far developed that, together with its surrounding membrane, it is about the size of a three-penny-piece. This circular spot is a little darker than the rest of the egg and floats close to the shell at the upper side of the egg when it is held horizontally. Now this spot is not easily seen when the egg is at rest; but, if the egg be held between the forefinger and thumb of the right hand, in the manner we have described above, in a fairly horizontal position, in front of a strong light, and then pressed with the points of the thumb and forefinger of the left hand, and sharply (but not violently) twist round a little, the top being twisted toward the eye of the operator, the circular spot, or embryo, will readily be seen as it floats back to the top of the egg. Try this first with a white-shelled egg, as in the case of brown eggs there is more difficulty in seeing the embryo. With a strong light, and a knowledge of what to look for, even dark brown eggs may be successfully tested in this way.

About the eighteenth day of incubation another method of testing may be adopted. A vessel of water of a temperature of 104 degrees or thereabouts and large enough to hold a sitting of eggs floating

on its surface should be got ready. A soft dry towel should always be at hand. The eggs are then taken from under the hen and put bodily in the water. It is best to do this, not when the hen is off to feed, but in the evening, leaving the hen sitting on the nest. It is best also to use a vessel with straight sides, as the eggs are liable to be moved by touching the sides of a sloping vessel. It is needful, too, that the vessel be placed either on the ground or on a solid or steady foundation of some kind.

The accuracy of the test depends on the stillness of the water. As soon as the commotion caused by placing the eggs in the water has calmed down it will (if there are live chicks in any of eggs) be noticed that some of the eggs bob about in a curious way. This is caused by the movement of the living chicks in shell shifting the centre of gravity of the egg and consequently its floating position in the water. If the movement is strong the chicken is strong, too. If there is any movement at all the chicken is living. It does not follow because an egg sinks that there is a dead chicken in it. Those which float very high out of the water are more likely to be dead than those that sink.

As soon as an egg moves it should carefully lifted out so as to disturb the water as little as possible, lightly dried and placed under the hen. In very dry weather it is better not to dry the eggs, but to put them damp under the hen, but eggs should never be put damp into an incubator. Those eggs which do not move in five minutes can be tested further by examining them with a light. If found to be partly clear they may be rejected. If they seem full and quite dark it is best to give them a chance under the hen, as there may be some little life in them.—*Feathered World* (England.)

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