

POULTRY.

Common Causes of Failure.

INSTANCES SHOWING LOSSES IN POULTRY-KEEPING THAT ARE DUE WHOLLY TO IGNORANCE.

BY S. LONDON.

Can farmers in general and village and town dwellers with available space embark in poultry culture with a reasonable prospect of success, is an everyday question of editors of poultry papers. Prospective teachers have to spend years in study before they can pass the examinations, and only when they are theoretically qualified to teach can they get a certificate permitting them to do so. That is the law or rule made to govern them. Railway postal clerks must pass a civil service examination, and after that they have to study to keep in line with the requirements of the service. Soap manufacturers have to study chemistry. Smelters of ores are practical chemists, and there is no exception to the rule that unless one is versed in his vocation he is handicapped. Every village history records failures in business resulting from a lack of knowledge pertaining to the industry.

A knowledge of hygiene to a certain extent is the foundation of a successful poultryman, and without this knowledge he is groping in the dark. When one has learned the composition of an egg, he can supply the poultry with the necessary elements to produce it. Crowding poultry together is a prolific source of many diseases. To illustrate, a breeder kept several hundred White Leghorn hens in one flock, and their food consisted of corn at morning, noon and night. At first the fowls seemed to do fairly well, and their owner was well pleased with his success, as they stood the corn the best of any breed he had ever tried. He did not realize that he was starving his hens, but such was a fact, however, as many of them died, and he closed out the balance of the flock. Why did they die? Because there were too many in his yard, the ground was covered with filth, poisoning the ground and air; and because of an ill-balanced ration—lack of protein in the food.

Farmers feed corn because they think it is the cheapest and best food, little realizing that for the principal food it is the dearest on the list. Any food is dear that does not supply the wants of the animal, for nothing can be gained by feeding it, and you lose your food in the deal. When a pig does not grow, you are out the cost of the food. Farmers have learned that they cannot produce milk when nothing but grain is fed the cows, yet they think hens can live and thrive on corn alone. One ton of wheat or corn will furnish the shells of ten dozen eggs, yet some farmers expect eggs on corn alone. When we stop to consider the limited amount of corn a hen can eat and digest, how can we expect her to obtain therefrom the lime for the shells and materials for the embryo? It is simply impossible. The best clover hay contains thirty times as much lime as corn or wheat, in addition to more protein or flesh-forming material. Therefore clover hay is the cheapest and best for cows or hens, and furthermore, you run no risk in feeding too much, as you are quite liable to do with grain.

Another case—a breeder had about one thousand chickens and neglected to provide green food. The drought caught him, and over half of the flock died. He saved the rest by turning them out into the woods. One acre of well-fertilized ground seeded to clover in the spring would have saved the chickens, if cut and fed to them. His neglect cost him the chickens, the food, and time spent on them. Bulky food is just as necessary for healthy action in a hen as a cow. Another breeder raised on a village lot four or five hundred young chickens yearly until he lost two hundred in one season by gapes. Clean, fresh dirt in the runs saved the rest of the flock and would have saved them all had it been attended to in time.

"Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise." Knowledge costs money and time, and the cases cited seem to be rather prodigal of both. Manufacturers are limited only by the market and their facilities for supplying the demand. Poultrymen have to contend with the same limits and the additional one of nature, which cannot be circumvented or avoided. My observation and experience warrant me in the belief that a large flock of poultry, although running loose around the buildings, cannot be kept many years in succession in a healthy, profitable condition, with the exception of turkeys, which will forage for miles around. One hundred hens in a flock will show a greater net profit than will five hundred. Fifty hens are better still, and if they are divided into two pens they will increase the net profit still more. That an army in camp suffers more and sustains greater losses than when in active fighting and marching every day, is an historical fact of all campaigns. We read about "intensive" poultry culture being possible, but always at the cost of time to renew the yards and runs so often that it seldom is practical, therefore is not to be recommended. The health of the stock is first, last and all the time to be sought, and unless it is obtained no progress can be made. A small flock requires less time and attention than a large one. The liability of disease and vermin increases at a greater ratio than the increase of the flock. That a few healthy hens are profitable and satisfactory to their owner is a fact that has been proved time and time again.—*Reliable Poultry Journal*.

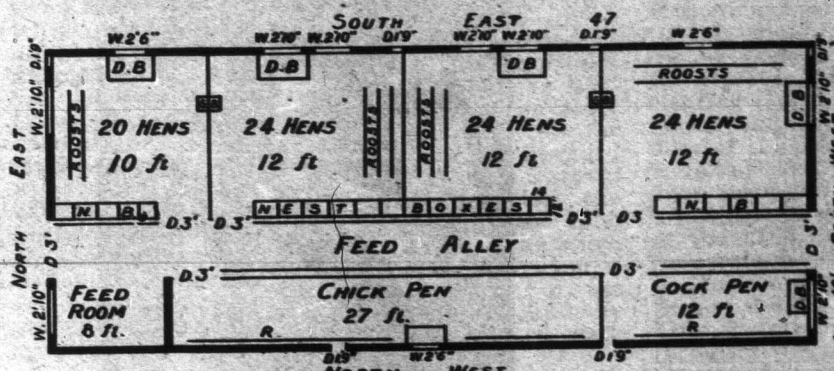
A Modern Poultry House.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

GENTLEMEN,—I herewith enclose for publication at your discretion the plan and description of our poultry buildings. The house is 47 ft. long, 18 ft. wide, and 7 ft. high at eaves, with a gable roof where straw is kept for litter. The walls are made of matched spruce on outside of studding, rough lumber on inside of studding, leaving a 4-inch air space, then a thickness of tar paper and dressed hemlock on inside, making in all a warm, wind-proof wall. The ceiling is of dressed hemlock, nailed on lower side of collar beams. All woodwork on inside of building is dressed to facilitate cleaning and whitewashing.

The building is divided into 6 pens, besides a feed alley and feed room. There is room for 100 hens, as when the breeding season commences and cocks are placed in breeding pens, the cock pen can be used for laying stock. The chicken pen is used for chicks at one season of the year, and fattening pen for cockerels and old hens at another season. In the 3-ft. alley, which has double doors at each end and a feed room at one end, where grit, grain, chop, bone cutter, etc., are kept, are placed the feed troughs in which are fed the warm mash and cut bone, and in which are also placed the water troughs. The hens have to stick their heads through between laths placed 2 inches apart, thus preventing them from soiling their feed with their feet. These laths extend 18 in. high. Above this is placed a movable shelf for the nest boxes, which serves as a bottom for nests and also a place for hens to fly into, instead of directly into the nest. The boxes are 14x12 inches, inside measure, with a 6-inch hole cut out of front of nest for hen to enter, and, laying behind the other 8 inches, she is partly hidden, thus, in a measure, preventing egg-eating.

When a hen sits, the nest can be turned around, with the hole towards the feed-alley, so that the laying hens do not disturb her, and she comes into the feed-alley to feed. A slanting board covers the nests, to prevent hens roosting thereon. The eggs are gathered from passage. From nests to ceiling wire netting is stretched, the partitions and pen doors being wire also, thus allowing the light to be evenly distributed, as well as not being liable to



GROUND PLAN OF POULTRY HOUSE OWNED BY L. & R. W. MAIN, WELLINGTON CO., ONTARIO.

harbor vermin. The windows have a double sash, and are 2½ feet from floor, with dust box in front to allow sun to warm the bath. The outside doors of each pen are double, 1½ feet square, and ½ of inside door is hinged to allow fowls to pass in and out, the whole door being opened to throw out used litter. A drop-board stands upon a kind of table, 2½ feet high, and 4 inches above this are placed the roosts (2x1 strips), thus allowing a hoe to be passed under to clean off the droppings. Thus, you see, the floor, which is of cement, rat-proof and dry, and easily cleaned out, is entirely clear for scratching space for hens, which is a great saving of space. Without any artificial heat, the thermometer registered only 2° below freezing during our coldest weather, and usually stands at from 40° to 60°.

L. & R. W. MAIN.

The Elements of Successful Poultry Raising.

If you wish to have poultry that will pay a profit, you must have a good breed. But no matter how good the breed, they will return no profit if they are not properly fed and housed. I think it is poor economy to let hens have the run of the pig-pen, sheep pen, barn, and about anywhere else they like to go. Hens should have a place to live in where water will not freeze in the coldest weather. As to breed, if you want layers especially you may choose either the Brown or White Leghorn or Black Minorcas, all of which breeds are excellent layers. If you want a general purpose fowl—that is, a bird moderately good for laying and profitable as a market fowl also—you may choose either the Plymouth Rock or Wyandotte.

To get the best results they must be fed judiciously—that is, not to over-feed nor under-feed. This is the way we feed our fowl in winter: For the morning meal we give them equal parts by weight of bran and shorts and a little clover hay steamed. This is mixed together and dampened with hot water or milk. About half enough for a feed is given them of this. Then a little grain is scattered in the litter to get them to take exercise by scraping for it. At noon they are given a few pulped turnips and a little more grain is scattered

in the chaff. At night they are given a good feed of peas and oats, equal parts by weight. Two or three times a week they are given a little green bone or fresh meat. They have pure water before them at all times or nearly so.

A mistake which not a few make is the leaving of the droppings under the roosts: they are cleaned out once or twice a year instead of once or twice a week, as they should be. The roosts should be frequently coal-oiled to keep down lice. Then there should be a dust bath in each pen, under the window if possible.

Peterboro Co., Ont.

P. S.—I am a boy only fifteen years old, so kindly excuse mistakes.—S. H. W.

Raising Turkeys in Manitoba.

In raising turkeys, I do not want to have them hatch before the 1st of June, as it is generally cold and damp, and young turkeys will not thrive in such weather, and I find that if once stunted, they never amount to much; and, besides, by that time there is something green for them, which is very necessary. They are fond of onion tops cut up in their feed, and of getting into the onion patch, which I have found to my sorrow, for when they once get a taste, they will not leave it until they have finished both tops and bottoms. In setting the first eggs under hens, it gives a chance of having a second flock if desired, and another advantage I find in having the young birds with hens is—they do not get into the habit of wandering so far away from home, as a mother turkey is never satisfied unless she is roaming all over the country. I know they get a great deal of insect and other food, but they too often furnish food for the wolves. I have had half my flock taken because, not being able to find them at night, they roosted out. When a second flock is desired, as soon as I notice them getting broody I break up their nests, and soon they will begin to lay again; and now is the time they will hide their nests, so I always try to find it before they want to set again, for when they once begin to sit it is hard to find them; they sit so steadily sometimes, they will not leave the nest more than a few times during the four weeks. Take the eggs away, replacing them with hen's eggs until she is ready to sit, then make a large flat nest in some suitable place in the turkey house. Always put a quantity of fresh earth in first, leaving it only slightly hollowed toward the center, and then put some dry leaves from the bush in the nest, and place the eggs in it. I never have any trouble getting them to take to their new quarters if they are wanting to sit badly. I always find they do best sitting right on the ground. I have had them hatch out as late as July, and do well, too, only they are not ready to market as soon as the others, but I always find a good market for turkeys at any season.

When not wanting to bother with the second flock, I have kept my turkeys laying all summer. When I wish to do that, I let them lay until about to sit, when I take the eggs away; if they are well fed, they will keep on laying. One year I killed the gobbler after mating season, and my turkeys laid until October. I packed their eggs in salt and kept them until Xmas, and the last was as good as the first, and one egg was as good as two hen eggs, they are so large. Two years ago I kept only two 2-year-old hens and one young hen. I purchased a young Bronze gobbler, and from the first and second layings I hatched 80 young birds. I did not raise them all to maturity, as I lost some by accidents, etc., but I had some fine birds. I never inbred; tried it once before I knew better, but found it a failure. Always try to keep them as near home as possible until the harvest is off, when they can be watched better. Turkeys do not like a close house to roost in, preferring to roost out of doors; but I do not find that suitable here. Give them as airy a place as possible, with high roosts. In fattening, I find that a soft feed for morning, with roots boiled and mixed with chop and wheat and barley mixed afterwards, is good. I like to leave the grain where they can get it when they want it. Never shut them up to fatten, but give them all they will eat, and they will not go far when the weather is cold. Don't kill them when there are pinfeathers on them, for they are so hard to dress and are not so salable. Always pick dry. I never have any trouble to get market for good fat turkeys.

A MANITOBA FARMER'S WIFE.

The best time to market the old hens is from the tenth of June to the first of July, just as they finish up their work laying and before the feathers begin to drop. A little care will help in selecting, for the combs will pale out, the faces look dull and the feathers dead. If you wait until the pin feathers start, the price will surely be much lower. Kill and get to market as fast as they stop laying, for they will then sell for more than at any other time, and the cost of keeping is stopped.

The best laying hen is the one on best terms with her owner. The one who is shy and nervous is an uncertain producer. Establish friendly relations among all the flocks, and gain by so doing.