

About the Farm

Feeding for Eggs

By M. A. Jull

The practice at Macdonald College is to feed a whole grain ration of two parts wheat, two parts corn and one part oats or buckwheat, during the winter months. If the corn is cracked it will give the hens more exercise than when fed whole. The grain mixture is scattered in the litter morning and evening, and the litter is kept in such a condition that considerable scratching is necessary. Enough grain is fed in the morning to keep the hens busy for several hours. In the evening they are given practically all the grain they will pick up before going to roost. There are many poultrymen who are not able to feed their flock the proper amount of grain from time to time. On the other hand, there are some poultrymen who believe in feeding a definite quantity of grain at each feeding. It is far better to feed the birds the amount they need from time to time, and as they will eat more at one feeding than another, it is practically impossible to state definitely any specific amount which the flock should be given for each feeding. A very simple way of finding out whether the birds are being fed properly or not is to brush away some of the litter, then blow the chaff and dust away, and if corn or wheat can be seen on the bare spot of the floor, the hens are being fed

too heavily. They should be made to clean everything up before being fed again.

Whole grain alone is not sufficient, since the birds must balance the ration with ground grains, to which can be added certain concentrated foods. The ground grains are chiefly wheat bran, crushed oats, cornmeal and middlings. To these ground grains may be added linseed meal, gluten meal, beef scraps or fish scraps. These are concentrated foods and supply the fowls with protein, which is largely lacking in the whole and ground grains. Considerable protein is necessary for the manufacture of eggs.

It is not necessary to use all of the materials mentioned in preparing a mash. At the same time the larger the variety the better the fowls like the mash and the better it serves its purpose. A good mash mixture is composed of the following: wheat bran, 200 lbs.; crushed oats, 120 lbs.; cornmeal, 100 lbs.; middlings, 100 lbs.; beef scraps, 60 lbs., and charcoal, 20 lbs. This makes a mash which is quite palatable and which the birds relish. In place of crushed oats, it may be well to use oatmeal feed, which is a by-product of the oatmeal industry and contains practically no hulls.

This mash may be fed in two ways: as a wet mash or as a dry mash. The wet mash consists of ground grains

thoroughly mixed and moistened with water or sour milk. The mash is fed in V-shaped troughs at definite times. The object in wet mash feeding is really to stimulate maximum egg production.

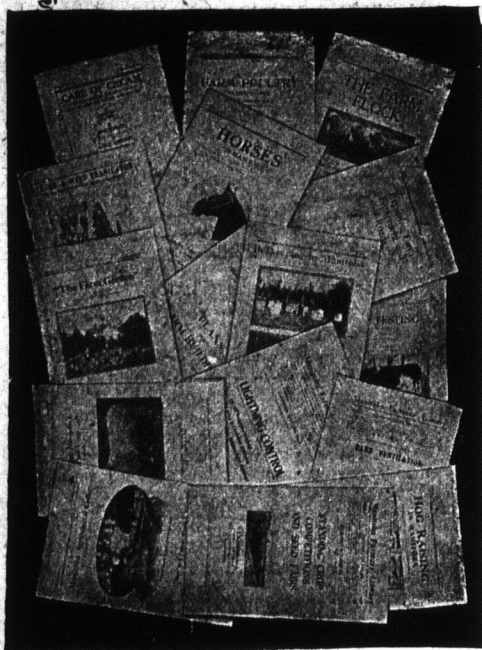
The troughs should be kept strictly clean, and it is wise not to overfeed with wet mash. Just give the birds as much as they will clean up in a few minutes. The best time to feed a wet mash is about noon or shortly after. When wet mash is fed, table scraps, potatoes and other waste products can be mixed with it to good advantage.

If the ground grains are fed in the form of a dry mash, labor is saved. The ground grains are thoroughly mixed, and placed in a self-feeding hopper from which the birds can help themselves at any time. This is a very satisfactory method, as it saves much labor, particularly where there is a large flock, and is not so apt to be abused. The principal factor is to have a hopper so constructed that none of the mash will be wasted. Excellent results have been obtained in feeding whole rolled oats from the hopper instead of a dry mash. The oats are relished and the birds do very well on them. Whenever these oats can be secured, it simplifies the feeding problem very much.

Beef scraps have been suggested as a form of animal food. In some localities ground green bone can be obtained at a reasonable price. Where such is the case the quantity of beef scrap in the mash

ration may be greatly reduced. Care should be exercised in feeding ground green bone, as one-half ounce per bird per day is heavy feeding. The green bone should always be in the very best condition. Sour milk is also an excellent animal food; it is one of the best poultry foods we have, and should be used more extensively. It is low in cost, and in addition to being a valuable egg producer it tends to keep the hens in good health. One of the most profitable ways in which sour milk may be used is in feeding it to laying hens.

While the birds are confined during the winter months some form of green food is absolutely necessary for best results. Give the birds mangels, turnips, or sprouted oats. Alfalfa or clover hay, if well cured, may be fed. Mangels are cheap and are easily grown, and the birds will consume large quantities of them. Sprouted oats also make an excellent form of green food. The method of sprouting is simple. Take the quantity of oats desired, soak them in lukewarm water for twenty-four hours, then spread them out on the floor of a fairly warm room, or place them in flat boxes so that the oats will spread out in a layer about one inch thick. Keep them moistened and stir them to prevent moulding. When they start to sprout do not disturb them, and when the sprouts are about three inches long, the oats may be given to the birds. Some form of green food should be supplied the birds



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Minister of Agriculture and Immigration for Manitoba

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