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SOME FACTORS THAT WOULD TEND TO ENHANCE THE VALUE OF THE POULTRY TRADE

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Carelessness in Fattening, Killing and Marketing Dressed Poultry a Cause of Much Loss—Better Stock Needed—What the Government Can Do—The Best Methods of Killing and Packing Described

FOR some time past we have been losing many thousands of dollars on our poultry because we have not been fattening our fowls properly. The marketing of lean chickens is wasteful, and yet comparatively few farmers attempt to fatten them at all. Much less attention is given in this country to the appearance of market poultry than abroad, where it is customary to use shaping crates, weights and other devices to render the dressed fowls attractive. On the other hand, some improvement is being made in Canada, and the progress is pleasing. If farmers and poultrymen would take as much interest in marketing dressed poultry as they do in marketing eggs, much better conditions would prevail.

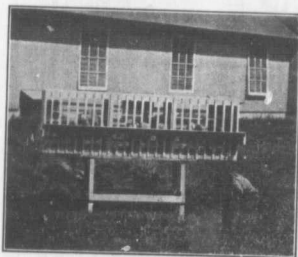
BETTER STOCK

That which is most necessary in the improvement of the Canadian poultry industry is improved stock. Although improvement has been made in methods of fattening, killing and dressing poultry, still the best success will only be made when the quality of the stock on the farms is vastly improved. The two most profitable branches of poultry farming are: First, the trade in new laid eggs, and, second, the marketing of dressed poultry. A portion of the poultry in all communities is of a fairly good table quality, and fairly well fattened when marketed. This portion varies greatly in different localities. Where Plymouth Rocks and other "American" breeds, such as the Wyandottes and Rhode Island Reds, predominate, the average quality of the packer's output is higher than in communities in which smaller or Leghorn breeds are kept. The American breeds along with the Orpingtons are general purpose fowls; are usually good layers, particularly in winter time, and make fine table birds, whereas all Leghorns, Minorcas and Anconas, are egg laying fowls, and are not well adapted to the production of roasters, though they make good broilers. In Canada, however, the broiler market is very limited. A good price may be obtained for broilers in Montreal, Toronto, and a few other large markets. Outside of this there is practically no broiler trade. So that what farmers are chiefly concerned with is the production of roasters; and Rocks, Wyandottes, Reds, Orpingtons, Dorkings and Games are best suited for this purpose. What is most needed is that the farmer must get rid of his scrubby stock, and, if possible, with some pure bred stock of good breeding. Pure bred stock will be more uniform in products, also better results in breeding work, and will be found more profitable in the long run.

Some of the methods of improving the quality of poultry of a locality that have been used with a degree of success are first paying a higher price for those breeds possessing good table quality, such as the Plymouth Rocks, Wyandottes or Rhode Island Reds, than for the products of the

lighter breeds and scrubby stock; second, selling cockerels of a utility type of the above mentioned varieties that some farmers bring in, to those farmers who have poor stock, in order that they may gradually improve the table qualities of their flock; third, where no good cockerels are bought from customers, importing utility pure bred cockerels, and selling them at cost or exchanging pound for pound for poultry brought in.

By a utility type cockerel is meant a good bird with strong shanks and legs set well apart, having a fairly long body, and a deep, full chest, and of good size. The birds usually make the



A First Class Method of Fattening

Crates fattened chickens always command a premium over dressed poultry not so well finished. In the illustration may be seen a fattening crate used at Macdonald College, Que., and in the background the fattening shed at the College.

greatest gain when about 3 or 4 months of age, when they should weigh from 3½ to 4 pounds.

OTHER METHODS OF IMPROVING THE INDUSTRY

It is quite evident that something must be done, and that soon, if conditions are to be improved to any extent. To a very great extent poultry has always been a neglected crop on the farm. At the same time the demand for dressed poultry has been increasing, with the result that Canada is now importing poultry. Also many large establishments in some of our principal cities are erecting fattening sheds for the purpose of fattening the farmer's fowls. They realize that the farmer will continue to ship lean and scrubby stock for some time yet, and that it will pay them to fatten these for three weeks before marketing, although the farmer could make larger profits than the buyer who buys the stock as it runs and fattens it. The marketing of lean chicks is wasteful, and here is where the farmer is throwing his money away, and still he continues to do so.

While indifference and negligence may be attributed to the producer, the dealer and consumer are not wholly innocent respecting the undesirable condition that prevails in the poultry trade.

The dealers often accept very largely without questioning, birds in any condition of flesh and appearance, and have made no distinction in price. The difference in economic value of well fleshed and lean birds has not been recognized. Consequently the farmer has not been encouraged to fatten his fowls. It seems, therefore, that the trade and the producers alike require some education.

A vast amount of poultry is still being prepared for the larger markets in a careless and haphazard manner, not graded as to size or quality, not uniform in shape or size, and all very unattractive in appearance. These are conditions which must be overcome, and educational work is necessary. It is along this line that the Dominion Government should take action, for, if anything is to be done, the Government should lead the way. Herein lay many opportunities of which the Government should take advantage.

DOING THINGS IN SASKATCHEWAN

For a number of years the Government of Saskatchewan has been operating poultry fattening stations in connection with their creameries. The purpose of the fattening station was: First, to obtain information on the cost of fattening chickens; second, to ascertain the feeling of the trade with respect to milk fed chickens; third, to learn what price could be obtained for that class of poultry; fourth, to show the farmers how they might with very little cost and trouble, flesh their birds at home; fifth, to study the best methods of killing, plucking and preparing them for market. The Government erected a few stations, and undertook to supervise the work of killine and preparing the birds for the trade, and also to find a suitable market and make payments direct to the farmers who supplied birds for feeding. The work at the stations has been conducted for four years with excellent results. It has had a decided beneficial influence on the poultry industry of the Province. The operation of fattening stations in connection with creameries is deserving of very careful consideration on the part of the Provincial and Dominion Governments.

Another good example of successful cooperation in fattening poultry for the market is to be seen at the Cowichian Creamery, Duncan, B.C. This creamery is cooperating with the egg collecting depot and the creamery, and is meeting with every success. The farmers and poultrymen are realizing higher prices than ever before, and there is a gradual improvement in the industry. This work could well be extended to other parts of the country, and possibly it is within the realm of the Poultry Producers' Association to undertake an educational and organization campaign along these lines—the Government through the Poultry Producers' Association.

KILLING AND BLEEDING

For market purposes the barbaric method of chopping off the head with the axe has been done away with largely and more modern methods are being employed. If dressed poultry is to reach customers with the best of flavor and wholesomeness, the most attractive appearance and in the best possible state of preservation, it must be properly raised, killed and dressed. We will not