

POULTRY.

Culling and Preparing Fowls for Winter Laying.

When the moulting is quite well passed, it will be well to cull the young stock. This is a task which needs careful detail and attention, and one that an amateur will find hard to do satisfactorily. If it is layers you are after, select those pullets which seem nervous, with a bright and rather large eye, with a well-built body of good size behind; such generally prove good layers, and I have selected many of such which gave records of 260 eggs in a year, proven by the use of trap nests. A pullet which is long and slender in body very seldom, if ever, makes a good layer. I have tried them by picking out ten of that sort and putting them in contest with the aforesaid selected pullets, and, as a result, during the months of December, January and February they could not show up within forty per cent of the well-selected stock, although receiving the same good care, and many times special feed. I did this for the purpose of experimenting whether in any way a person could tell by appearance the pullets of better-laying quality. There may be some who object to this statement, but I am willing to back it by a contest in any honest form, during any or all months in the year. After selecting the pullets to the best of your ability, you will no doubt be surprised to see a great number of culls left. These will return you a profit if disposed of at your local market or to some private hotel or restaurant—places which are never glutted with good dressed poultry. Having selected your pullets, you will now turn to the selection of your cockerels. This must be done judiciously, and you must take special pains in doing same. The cockerels you mean to keep over for breeding purposes should be extra good, as they are half the breeding flock, and too much care cannot be given in their selection. I have always done well by selecting a large, vigorous fellow, providing he had no bad defects. If your pullets have any defects, select cockerels extra strong in those points, and keep on doing so until the pullets are improved; but it will be useless to do this if, while the pullets are improving in some respects, they are also deteriorating in others. It will be well to introduce new blood into the flock each year, so the pullets will not inherit the defects of their sires or grandsires. You should always select one or more extra cockerels, so as to be sure of one in case of death or other mishaps.

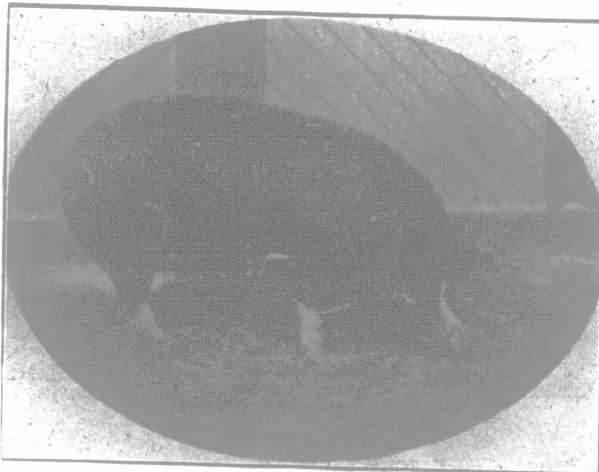
PREPARING FOR LAYERS.

Now, as the matter of culling or selection has been gone through, we may treat the matter of preparing for the layers, which I propose should be the next on the subject. When the selection of our winter layers is gone through and the surplus stock has been sent to market, we can then go into preparing for the layers. The first thing is to secure for them a roomy, well-ventilated and warm house for the severe weather, and one with abundance of light. When this is done it will be well to close in a number of departments for each flock of fowl; I would advise keeping no more than twenty-five in each apartment, and they would, I believe, yield a larger per cent. of profit if not more than twelve or fifteen were kept in each space. Those apartments should allow at least five square feet for each fowl; a smaller space would huddle them too close for best results. When they are all enclosed in their respective winter homes, they should be supplied with a good dust bath in which a quantity of sulphur had been put; also plenty of grit and fresh water. I know no better way than one of those patented grit-and-food boxes, for sale by poultry-supply dealers. They are neat and economical, as they do not waste any of the substance. Also, use a water fountain; it will soon pay for itself. As eggs are composed of a large percentage of water, it will be necessary to keep it constantly before the fowls. They should have plenty of green food, such as cabbage, mangels, wurzels, etc.; a cabbage head tied some eighteen inches above the floor induces exercise, which is essential for the layers; it will keep them toned up and in healthy condition. Green-cut bone, oyster shell and fresh meat should be supplied regularly, as they contain some of the principal elements of the egg. Cold drafts should be carefully avoided, as they bring on great chances for ailments such as colds, which generally develop into roup, and once this dreaded disease gets into the flock it will take a long time to get it out; I have seen it in flocks for years.

THE ROOSTING SPACE.

The roosting space should be very warm during the night. A good plan is to put thick canvas on all sides, and the front one could be arranged to swing up and down, so the hens could have a sort of door to go in and out; another very essential thing in the roosting apartment is to keep lice far away; if they come it

will be a task to get rid of them. A good remedy is to clean the droppings each morning, and scatter dry sand or dirt of some kind over the floor under the roosts; put kerosene on the roosts twice weekly, or, another good plan is to spray the roosts, walls and floors with very strong whitewash, making sure it gets into all cracks and crevices. A good thing to put in the nests is tobacco leaves or insect powder of some reliable make. If eggs happen to get broken in a nest clean it immediately, wash the eggs and refill the nest with fresh straw or other nest material. A good plan is to whitewash the nests inside and out, having them removable, so they will be handy to clean, etc. I believe in having a poultry house sufficiently warm so that there



A Bacon-type Berkshire Sow.

First at Ontario Winter Fair, Guelph, 1904. Bought there by Geo. Thomson & Son, Woodstock. Now owned by Wm. Wilson, Brampton, Ont.

will be no frosted combs; a hen with a comb frozen will not lay, and you could not very well expect her to. Build your house warm and comfortable, but do not use artificial heat.

VENTILATION.

I wish to impress upon my readers that ventilation is as essential to the laying flock as the food they consume. An open-air shed would be very good, when the fowls could run out on nice days in the winter time. A yard or pen of good dimensions, with an open front, would be very congenial. This should be well covered about eight inches deep with litter, in which loose grains could be fed. They would need to exercise both to keep warm and to get their food, and therefore would keep in a fine healthy condition, so essential in the laying flock. I am confident a plan of this kind would answer well, as it affords ventilation during the larger part of the day, and during the night a construction projecting through the roof would be all that was needed; this would bring on no drafts, and I am sure it will pay others to try this, which I have found to be an excellent ventilation plan.

J. W. DORAN.



Broomhouse Laddie.

Yorkshire boar. First and champion over all breeds, Highland Show, Glasgow, 1905.

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A Few Hints for Duck Raisers.

In the Victoria Journal of Agriculture, H. V. Hawkins concludes an article on "Ducks for Profit," with these few reminders:

Don't attempt to catch the ducks by the legs. It is much safer to handle them by the neck. Don't reduce their weight by taking a lamp amongst them at night.

Never throw dry lime in a duck pen; it kills. Always provide plenty of carbonate and phosphate of lime to assist shell-making. This is found in oyster shell.

Keep plenty of coarse sand, old mortar and a little charcoal in a box for laying ducks. Keep ducks away from creek at night time, otherwise you will lose many eggs.

Ducks should always be locked in at night and kept on an absolutely dry, soft floor. They lay best, and the eggs are easily gathered.

To breed the most healthy ducklings, avoid the heavy, fattened show birds which lay but few eggs, those usually infertile. Show ducks are almost useless to breed from.

Never hurry the laying ducks. It usually injures them; sometimes seriously. When handling ducks never hold them by the wing.

Ducks should never be permitted to run with fowls. They both do best in pens by themselves.

When sickness attacks ducks it is useless to doctor. The best remedy for duck ailments is the "Lily Bulb of the Kitchen"—plenty of sliced raw onion in the mash, and an absolutely dry, soft bed.

Buff Orpington Ducks.

The following, quoted from Mr. Jorgen Anderson, Oakleigh, Australia, comes as a surprise to those of us who have always supposed that the Pekin was the only duck for utility purposes: "My Buff Orpington ducks started to lay at the end of June (one must bear in mind that the Australian seasons are the reverse of ours), and layed up to the middle of January, when they commenced to moult. They averaged 164 eggs each. I have found the Buffs to be harder than Pekins and Runners. During the great heat in January a large number of young Runners died in this locality. I lost everyone of my young stock, although I was careful both as to feeding and shade. I know of three breeders who had over 700 young Runners between them, and all died. My neighbors and friends have lost all theirs. My Buff ducklings, however, stood the heat; not one showed the least indisposition; there were some a few days old, and others up to eight weeks. The Buffs have evidently more vitality than the Runners, and appear to be more suitable for keeping in the changeable Australian climate. As to laying, they are not behind Runners, and far ahead of Pekins, and have a wonderful capacity for putting on flesh. I breed Pekins and Runners as well as Buffs, but the latter appear capable to fill, profitably to their owner, the place of both the former."

The Buff has an advantage over the white duck which our Australian friend does not mention. The white duck, always dabbling around any little puddle it can find, is usually dirty. It will present a pleasing appearance only when carefully looked after. The Buff does not show the dirt, and under ordinary circumstances is more attractive to look at.

A common mistake, with reference to the profit in raising ducks, is made by some because they notice that a duck eats much more than a chicken. A full-grown duck does not outweigh a full-grown chicken enough to pay for the extra feed, but a duckling can be made to weigh from five to six pounds as quickly as a chick can be made to weigh two. In most cities there is a great demand for these "green ducks," as they are called, and here is where the profit in duck-raising comes in. If one is near enough to a city to ship without too much expense, he will find that the very rapid growth of young ducks, and the price paid for such youngsters, makes them a source of profit if sold at the right age. No stream or natural pond is needed for raising ducks. Breeding ducks should have a place to swim, in order that the eggs may be fertile and the ducklings vigorous when hatched, but a good wide trough is sufficient. Ducklings do not need water to swim in while growing. It is more profitable to raise them without, for they put on flesh faster, and are more plump and tender at the marketing size if they have not been allowed to swim.

W. I. T.