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WHEN WRITING TO ADVERTISERS PLEASE MENTION THE GUIDE

THE GRAIN GROWERS' GUIDE

Mother's Hens

By Mrs. F. E. Shepherd, Stalwart, Sask.

Editor's Note.—The question of marketing farm products is a complicated one. During the course of the year many complaints are received stating that prices paid by local dealers for farm produce, particularly chickens and eggs, are so low that no profit can be made from these by-products of the farm. The writer of "Mother's Hens" does not agree with this, however, and she shows in this article how she is always able to obtain profitable prices for all her produce. Readers cannot afford to miss the advice which is given in this chapter. If the principles taught throout this series of articles were applied generally throut the farmers' whole business, there would be a great many more contented homes throout the West in a very short while.

CHAPTER VIII.

"And now, dear, if you have finished your dinner, come and have a look at my beauties," and Margaret led the way into the 'little sitting-room, from whence issued a succession of cheerful "peeps."

Will rose obediently and followed her and she proudly threw back the dark blanket she always kept hanging in front of the incubator window.

of the incubator window. "There, now," she asked, "don't they look sweet; look at that little monkey over there, only just come out." Will looked at them a moment thought-

fully, quizzically. "Cover them up, cover them up," he hastily said at last. "Nasty little things,

hastily said at last. "Nasty little things, nasty, 'orrible little things. I remember the first time mother used that machine. She simply couldn't resist opening the door when about half of them were hatched, and it checked them coming out. And ma, she just hated to see them die like that, so she took the tops off all the rest of the eggs, lifted their heads out and laid them out in rows just-like a lot of wounded soldiers. You never saw such a lot of wrecks, but most all of them got alright by next morning. I'm afraid I've no use for chicken. Now, if they were only colts—..."

His wife dropped the blanket indignantly. "There, go out and get on with your harrowing. You never say a good word for chickens unless they are fried. Your mother must have been very fond of boys to have brought you up at all." She chased him out of the house and

she chased him out of the house and read her letter over again.

"And now, Margaret dear, your one aim and object must be to so feed and care for your entire flock and press them on, so as to be able to market them early, when prices are high, instead of keeping them around, as most people do, until Christmas, when prices are sure to drop —and drop heavily. Kill your ducklings when they are ten weeks old, after picking out six or eight of them for your next year's breeding pen. You had better get a good drake from a good reliable poultry firm and not trade around for one. It will be more satisfactory. You will find the ducklings rather a job to pick, but you must take it as being 'all in the day's work.' Don't tear the skin and keep the feathers separate for your own special pillows or to make a nice present of a sofa pillow or something similar.

"Your turkeys should be a good weight by Thanksgiving. Kill them every one for that day, keeping back three or four of the smallest ones to grow bigger for your own use at Christmas. Your same breeding pen will do, as they are quite young birds. You had better sell a 10 or 12 pound turkey at Thanksgiving for 25 cents a pound than keep him another eight weeks when he may perhaps weigh 14 or 15 pounds and only get 18 cents. Last year I sold mine for 23 cents, head and feet on and undrawn, but, of course well fasted, the first week in October, while my neighbors, who kept theirs until Christmas, could only get 15 cents neck and feet off and drawn ready for table.

"Now about the roosters. Directly you finish setting, shut up your roosters. Feed them all they will eat for about two weeks, then kill them and send them all at once to your dealer. Tell him just what they are, but poultry will be scarce about then and you will get a fair price. You will find you have around a hundred laying hens. Now, as they become moulty, you will probably

think the best thing to do is to kill them, too, as they will not lay while they are moulting; but that is wrong. A hen that moults early will get over it early and lay during the winter, while the later moulting ones will be shivering around until December and not lay until March. So as your hens show signs of losing their feathers, catch them on the perch after they have gone to roost and put a leg band on them, until you have got about 40 or 50 done, and kill all the rest of them as you see fit. Do not keep any over that have scaly leg or blemishes of any kind. Keep only the best. I would kill them at the end of September if I were you. They will have had the run of the farmyard during threshing time and be in better condition then than if kept till a month later. Keep up your weekly supply regularly to your buyer. He will then rely on it and can always depend on them for his best customers, but for Thanksgiving kill all you can possibly find time to pick. But when you pay him a surprise visit during the holiday and see the chicken he has paid you 18 cents a pound for marked 'Very choice-23 cents,' and your precious turkeys he is that day giving you 23 cents for, labelled, 'From our own farm, only 27 cents per pound,' don't kick. Your buyer has heavy expenses rent, taxes, etc., and quite a few bad debts, whereas he takes just as many or as few as you choose to send, always providing your offering is properly killed and dressed—sends you your check and you have no further bother.

"I commence selling my limewater eggs the first week in November. Never sell any of these at your local store. Always sell your genuine 'new-laid' eggs there. But dealers in the big towns, where they depend almost entirely on cold storage eggs, will be glad to get them. Get Will to take them out of the limewater barrel for you and bring them upstairs. It is an awful cold job and the lime is so hard on one's hands. Cover them well with clean, cold water and stand them close to the stove to get the chill off. Then, with a soft dish-cloth, wash every egg and lay them all on"the table to dry. Pack them in thirty dozen egg crates and send them off. Be extra careful to see they look nice and do not get dusty in transit. If it is very cold, put your carriage heater in the sleigh and wrap them up in a couple of horse blankets. They are worth taking quite a bit of trouble over. Thirty dozen eggs at 45 cents a dozen come to—let me see—how much? I never could reckon without pencil and paper; and you should have nearly 3,000 in your two big barrels."

SASKATCHEWAN SPECIAL TRAIN

A feature of the "Better Farming" special, which will be sent out by the Saskatchewan government over the C. N. R. lines during this summer, will be the Nursery car filled up with every conceivable form of amusement and comfort for the little ones, who thus can be looked after while their busy mothers are ahead in the special train listening to the government lecturers on better farming. No expense is being spared to make this first nursery car up-to-date.

The "Better Farming" special will cover the territory from Moose Jaw to Gravelburg, Bengough and Kipling, thence to Alsask and back to Saskatoon. The exact route and dates of the "Better Farming" special will be announced later. May 19, 1915

FARMERS!

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