

Our Poultry Corner

If you have some things you do not understand in connection with your poultry and want some information, state your case briefly and to the point, writing on one side of paper only, and address it to THE MONITOR PUBLISHING COMPANY LIMITED, we will submit it to Prof. Landry, and when his answers are received we will publish them withholding your name if you so desire it.

HOW TO SUCCEED WITH CHICKS AND TURKEYS

RAISING CHICKS WITH HENS

I have a house 8 x 8 feet for the brooding hens. I always break up the early setters and those that become broody in April I let alone until I get the required number. The first week in May I thoroughly clean and disinfect the house and nests and put in the nests a layer of lime, then alfalfa hay because of its pliability and lack of hollow stems.

Scatter eight or 10 moth balls through the hay, but not so as to touch the eggs. Then I put 18 eggs in each nest and set 21 or 22 hens. I carry the hens in after dark taking each up on my hand just as she sits on the nest, I can move them anywhere this way and they always "stay on."

A BUSY DAY

The day for the chicks to hatch is sure a working day. I get someone to help with the housework for two days, for I am "not at home"; I am in the chicken house. You have to stay with them, as the hens become nervous. I remove each chick and bit of shell as soon as the chick is dry. At night I divide up the chicks between the hens so none will leave the nests.

I have 18 good coops with board platforms. I set them closely together in two rows facing a 10-foot feed coop made of laths. The next morning I put the chicks in coops and give the same number to each hen. For two days I keep each brood shut in its coop.

The third day I take 2½ yards of new calico and tear it into 18 strips. I tie one end to each coop and the other end securely around each hen's leg and turn them out. I do this to get them used to their quarters and to keep them up until the chicks are strong. I watch hens to keep them from getting tangled up. I always close each coop at night and tie each hen in the morning, but never turn them loose in the dew or rain.—Mrs. Ida M. Tedrow.

RAISING TURKEYS WITH HENS

After several years of very indifferent results with young turkeys I finally stumbled upon a method which I have followed with good success, and have raised many broods without losing a single poulter. I prepare nests for my turkeys in the early spring by turning down some barrels in a secluded place back of the hay sheds and in the plum thicket. I put some hay and several China eggs in each barrel, and the turkeys will appropriate these nests when they start to lay.

I gather the eggs each day and put them in a cool place, turning them every other day. When the hen turkey has laid from 11 to 15 eggs, she will stop laying and want to set. I then take out the nest eggs and bar the entrance to the nest, and after eight or 10 days she will start laying again.

She rarely chooses one of the nests for her second clutch of eggs, but usually hides them in a brush pile or in a sheltered place in the edge of the meadow or alfalfa field. I take away her second laying, but when she starts to lay the third time I let her alone and she hatches and rears her brood without any help, finding feed for them until they are nearly grown.

A FEW EGGS TO EACH HEN

I divide each clutch of eggs between two hens, setting them at the same time. I use insect powder liberally on the hens as chicken lice and mites are fatal to young turkeys. On the 28th day the young birds begin to hatch and I remove them from the nest and keep them in a basket of cotton until all are hatched. As turkey eggs are remarkably fertile, it frequently happens that every egg hatches.

I use an old wagon bed for a yard and in one end of it put a tight hen coop with a tightly fitting door that can be shut at night. I put both hatches of young turkeys and one hen in the wagon box turning the other hen loose. The turkeys are left in the wagon box until they are large enough to fly over the sides. I put in a good sized piece of coarse sand and a good-sized pile of coarse sand and a piece of grass sod for them to pick at. Occasionally I throw in a few

onion tops and lettuce leaves. The wagon box and coop must be kept clean.

THEIR FIRST FEED

When the babies are 36 hours old I give them their first feed which is finely chopped hard-boiled eggs, shells and all, slightly sprinkled with black pepper. Half an egg is enough for a feed for 12 or 13 poults and I feed them five times a day. One of the main essentials in raising turkeys is to feed them a small quantity, but feed often. Never allow feed to stand before them.

On the third day I alternate the boiled egg with corn bread, soaked in sweet milk, squeezed dry and dusted with sand. Occasionally feed the corn bread dry and crumbled up in small pieces. I give one feed of cottage cheese each day and keep plenty of clean water in their pen all the time. I use a pie tin and put a good-sized rock in the centre so that they can neither turn it over nor wet their feathers. When they are a week old I add a little cracked corn or kafir to their daily ration.

The louse that gets the poult is rarely found by the inexperienced. Pick up one of the birds and gently lay the wing along the left forefinger, holding the turkey in the left hand. With the right hand turn back the soft feathers which cover the base of the big wing feathers, and you will see the lice deep down between the big quills. Grease the top and under side of wings every week or the lice will get the start of you. While young turkeys will not stand neglect, I have found that if they are promptly and carefully tended until they get a good start they are no more bother to raise than chickens or ducks.—Clara Kelley, Ohio.

HOMEMADE CHICKEN FOOD

The best is emphatically the cheapest in selecting food for baby chicks. The first few weeks are the most critical of the fowl's life and the growth and development made at this time are important factors in determining its future welfare and usefulness. A strong healthy chick properly fed should weigh twice as much when 10 days old as when first hatched. Extreme care must be exercised to see that they receive nothing but sound sweet grains free from "heating" and mould.

Chicks grow better and remain healthier when the bulk of their food is fed in dry form. Dry chick food, i. e. mixed grains finely ground to about the size of wheat screenings or millet, when fed in the litter compels the chicks to hustle and scratch for their food, and is ideal for developing strong, sturdy constitutions and digestive systems. Commercial chick food is suitable when freshly ground and pure.

A very good chick food that can be made at home is the following: 10 pounds sound old corn and 10 pounds sound clean wheat. This is ground to the fineness mentioned above, the meal screened out and half as much by weight of steel-cut oatmeal size B added. We prefer this oatmeal (not rolled oats) as the quality and freshness are unquestionable, being intended for human consumption.

One or two-year-old corn should always be used for chick food, the flint varieties being particularly desirable. Food for a few hundred chicks can be easily ground at home in one of the small grist mills that sell for around \$5, or a second hand grocery size coffee mill can sometimes be purchased very cheap, and will do the work nicely. For larger flocks of chicks it is best to mix the grains at home and take them to the local custom grist mill.

To screen out the fine meal we pass the ground mixture over a screen made of galvanized fly screen or mosquito netting. If one does not intend to throw the food in the litter the mixture can be fed unscreened in small troughs and will be cleaned up readily by the chicks.—Maurice H. Decker.

In packing hatching eggs for shipment use great care to pack them firmly to avoid breakage. There are several styles of packing boxes which are cheap and serviceable. Lacking one of these lines a splint market basket with excelsior, wrap each egg with a handful of excelsior, cover them with another layer of this material and then sew on a cloth cover.

The cock is more than half the flock and is largely responsible for vigor and prolificacy. Select the best that can be had regardless of cost if you expect to breed up your flock.

Horticulture

(By Prof. W. Saxe Blair)

THE BRONZED CUTWORM

Appearance.—In general colour this cutworm is greyish-brown or bronze, with conspicuous straight longitudinal pale-coloured stripes. These are as follows: A dorsal stripe down the middle of the back, two others on each side above the spiracles, the upper of which is wide and the lower narrow, and a very wide band below, but touching the spiracles. The shield, behind the head is black, divided by the dorsal and upper stripes. The head is yellowish-brown and unmarked. The feet are paler than the body, but black at base. At the posterior end of the body there is also a black shield, which is divided by the upper stripes. When mature it is about an inch and three-quarters in length.

The forewings of the moth vary from a glossy-brown mouse colour to a reddish-brown colour, the transverse lines being paler. The brighter contrasting colour occupies the middle portion of each of the upper wings. The round and kidney-shaped spots appear as small, pale areas, the same colour as the outer portions of the wings. The hind wings are glossy-brown, the fringes being reddish. The moth with expanded wings is about 1½ inches in width.

Habits and Life-history.—While this cutworm is common and widely distributed in Eastern Canada, it has, fortunately, in the past been found to injure chiefly grass lands in the Maritime Provinces. In one year (1891) large areas of marsh hay in Westmoreland County, New Brunswick, were entirely destroyed. In some sections the injury was very general; on one farm where the sward land had been sown to barley and wheat, such crops were practically ruined. In the United States the Bronzed Cutworm is injurious to corn, and has been known to climb fruit trees and attack the buds and leaves. It is, however, a grass-feeding species, and almost every year may be found in varying numbers in meadows or pasture fields. At Ottawa we have found the larvae commonly from April to early June. Mature specimens have been frequently met with about the end of May and during the first week of June.

In Eastern Canada we have collected the moths in numbers in August and September. The eggs are laid in late summer or autumn, and the winter is passed in the larval stage. On one occasion, I secured eggs from a captive female moth on September 9.

THE STRIPED CUTWORM

Appearance.—Pale brownish in colour, with a slight yellowish tinge on the back, or dorsum. The sides are dull grey, and the underneath portion of the body, or venter, is greenish. Down the centre of the back there is a pale stripe margined on either side with dark brown. The markings on the sides are as follows: a wide subdorsal brownish stripe (enclosing tubercle ii); a narrow, whitish, upper lateral stripe, touching lower edge of sub-dorsal stripe; a wider, more conspicuous, white lateral stripe, and a wide, white, stigmatal band. The head and shield on back of first segment are shiny brown, the former mottled with darker brown and the latter divided by three pale stripes. The tubercles on the body are dark brown and the spiracles are black. The front feet are pale brownish and the pro-legs or posterior feet, are similar in colour to that of the under side of the body. When full grown this cutworm is about 1½ inches long.

The moth which is known as the Checkered Rustic is from about 1¼ to nearly 1½ inches wide when the wings are expanded. The frontwings are brownish-grey, with a pale pinkish tinge. The cross lines are readily apparent, the one nearest the body being yellowish, the others paler. The round kidney-shaped spots are quite distinct, the former being greyish and the latter yellowish, filled partly with brown. Between these spots and to the second cross line from the body, the colour is blackish and very contrasting. The outer margin of these wings is darker. The hind wings are brown, becoming whitish towards centre and base.

Habits and Life-history.—In June, 1914, this cutworm was the cause of serious losses, particularly in vegetable gardens, in the Provinces of Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and Prince Edward Island, and doubtless occurred destructively in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, although no specimens were received from these latter provinces. In the Ottawa district it was especially troublesome on the Central Experimental Farm, where many annual flowering plants and young vegetable and tobacco plants were destroyed. Its feeding habits were similar to the Dark-sided Cutworm, in fact working together in the same fields. Cabbage, lettuce, beans, beets, spinach, and other vegetables are freely

attacked, and although chiefly a garden cutworm it has been known also to injure plum, apple, pear and cherry.

This species occurs chiefly in the eastern provinces of the Dominion, but fortunately it is not a regularly occurring cutworm and, as yet, in Canada has only appeared intermittently as a destructive caterpillar. In Ontario and Quebec we have collected the moths commonly in July and, to a less extent, in August. There is apparently only one brood in a year. In 1912, one larva from Prince Edward Island buried in the earth to pupate on June 29, and the moth emerged on July 22. In Ontario, in 1914, the caterpillars were full grown, and pupation was entered on June 23 to 27, the moths emerging on July 11 to 16. The length of the pupal state varied from sixteen to twenty-two days. One larva from Manitoba pupated on July 29, and the moth emerged on July 29. In this latter province the moths have been collected in early August.

THE PALE WESTERN CUTWORM

Appearance.—Of a cordid whitish or greyish colour; no markings on the body. The shield behind the head is brown with a whitish stripe in the middle. The spiracles are black and the tubercles are dark brown. Dorsal vessel conspicuous in some specimens. The thoracic feet are pale brown, the prolegs being concolorous with the body. The head is pale brownish with a conspicuous band of dark brown, or black, on either side near the centre, somewhat after the sides of the letter H; the ocellae are black, the mouth parts blackish. When mature, this cutworm is from about 1¼ to nearly 1½ inches long.

The forewings of the moth are of a light, greyish colour. The cross lines, or orbicular spot, and the kidney-shaped, or reniform spot, are also inclined to be inconspicuous, and more or less filled with brown. The claviform mark close beneath the round spot is brown and the spaces on the side, inwardly, of the orbicular and reniform spots are also brownish. The hind wings are brown in some specimens, becoming whitish towards base. The wings when expanded are about 1¼ inches in width.

Habits and Life-history.—This cutworm is an excellent example of a rare and little-known species becoming decidedly destructive. Until 1911 it was not known as an injurious insect. In June of that year reports of extensive injury to grain crops in southern Alberta by a species of cutworm were received by us. One correspondent claimed to have lost 320 acres of wheat before June 21. During May and June, 1912, a very large acreage was destroyed in that part of Alberta known as the Lethbridge Land District. It was carefully estimated that fully 33 per cent. of the grain sown was destroyed. From personal visits to infested districts made by Mr. W. H. Fairfield, Superintendent of the Dominion Experimental Station, Lethbridge, it was calculated that between 30,000 and 35,000 acres of grain had actually been destroyed. The crops chiefly attacked were fall and spring wheat, oats, barley, flax, alfalfa and beets. The young cutworm apparently only feed above ground for the first few days after hatching from the eggs. In 1912, larvae collected at Lethbridge on May 6 were received at Ottawa on May 10. They differed in size from about half an inch to 1 inch in length. Some became full-grown and entered the earth for pupation on May 28. The larvae remained in the earth, no change taking place until June 18 when the first pupa was observed. The moth from this emerged on July 19; others emerged later, the last issuing on August 21. In 1913, Mr. E. H. Strickland, in charge of the Entomological Laboratory at Lethbridge, Alberta, who is studying this insect, and its control found the first pupa on July 11. By the middle of August all specimens had pupated in the field, the pupal period varying from twenty-eight to thirty-four days. In late August and during the first half of September the moths were on the wing. In the same year, I visited southern Alberta and found the cutworms fairly numerous in fields of spring wheat, fall wheat, and oats. On May 6, larvae in some fields were in numbers from 3 to 11 per square foot, and on this date were mostly from one-quarter to one-half inch long. In the field, on two occasions, Mr. Strickland found the eggs in the soil the first time on September 17, when seventy-seven eggs were found. These were mostly attached to each other in groups of from two to eighteen. The second finding was on December 3, when a group of three only was taken from frozen ground. The eggs hatched in a heated laboratory and adult moths were reared. The eggs undoubtedly, under normal conditions, would not have hatched until the following spring.

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