

# Common Poultry Diseases

Their Cause, Prevention and Cure

By Prof. M. C. Herner, Manitoba Agricultural College

(Written specially for The Grain Growers' Guide)

In taking up a discussion of diseases affecting poultry it might be well to first of all consider the common causes of any disease breaking out in a flock of poultry. There are four, which can be briefly stated as (a) those arising from weak constitutions, lack of vigor and vitality, (b) those coming from poor food and improper feeding, (c) those due to the conditions under which the flock is kept, (d) those caused by apparently healthy fowls coming in contact with diseased ones and getting the disease in this way. While all diseases may not be directly traceable to any one of these four, still they are always due to one or other of the four causes. Under farm conditions any of these may cause disease, or one may work in combination with another one or all of them and produce a disease. It is also a

farm flock goes a long way in making the birds disease-proof, or almost so. Good health, strong constitution, vigor and vitality will enable a flock to withstand the effects of adverse conditions pretty well, whereas fowls lacking in these are always more or less susceptible even under the most favorable conditions. When a flock like the latter is neglected, disease will gain a stronger foothold and cause greater ravages in a short time than it would in the former case. The indication of good health, vigor, vitality and strong constitution is found in the red comb, bright eye, active sprightly movements, short bill, full face, short neck, and a low-set, deep and wide body. The opposite of these indicate a lack of constitution, vigor and health. Continued neglect in the best of flocks will mean disease of some kind sooner or later, and once it is present it is always a difficult matter to overcome it entirely. A flock of single fowls that have gone thru a siege of sickness are of very little use as breeders afterwards.

## Roup

In taking up the different diseases the most common one is roup. This is nothing more than a cold of continued standing. There are about five different forms of this disease, but in our work we will only touch on the three most common. Ordinary roup is always known by the swelling of the eyes, known as pus sacks; canker, another form of roup, is known by the white scabs that form at the base of the tongue and in the angle of the jaws; these give off a very offensive odor. Diphtheritic roup is the third form. This is known by the ulcerated areas which occur in the throat and at the entrance to the windpipe. These increase in size until the entire mucous lining of the throat becomes inflamed and the fowl dies from suffocation. A large quantity of mucous, or slimy saliva, is always present and the throat takes on a bluish color. These three

sufficient so that a thin film of oil will cover the entire surface of the water. A teaspoonful of carbolic acid to a pail of drinking water is also a good preventive. Or, as much potassium permanganate as will stay on a five-cent piece to a pail of water. Remove all diseased hens. Kill off any that have the disease pretty far advanced. Those having only slightly swollen eyes may be treated by rubbing a small quantity of carbolated vaseline on the face and eyes, and also down the throat, first pressing pus out of the nostrils. Coal oil injected into the nostrils with a fountain pen filler is also a good practice. The head may also be washed with a one per cent. solution of carbolic acid, or hydrogen peroxide. In turkeys it is well to cut open the swellings and press out the pus then wash with these solutions or the vaseline. This is the simplest method of treatment, and any birds that do not respond should be killed off promptly. Feed the entire flock; one pound of Epsom salts dissolved in hot water and mixed in a bran mash to every hundred hens once a week for a few months. This is the best tonic I know of. Roup cures may be all right in their place, but generally the cost is greater and the results not as satisfactory as when the pure and simple remedies are used.

For canker in the throat and mouth, rub off the white scab, then apply the carbolated vaseline. Repeat the application every day. The carbolic solution may also be used. This form of roup offers very stubborn resistance and it seldom happens that a bird having it can be cured entirely. It is likely to recur after all traces of it have apparently been removed. Follow the same method of handling the flock as above directed. If at any time this disease should break out prompt steps must be taken immediately to stamp it out, for once it gains a foothold it is next to impossible to wipe it out.

Diphtheritic roup is usually caused by exposure to strong wind, draughts, and storm during the night. There is

ing the scab the affected areas will bleed. This disease is caused by the germ getting into the wounds which the hens get by fighting. It is common when hens are put in a new house, or when new stock is brought in. At this time there is usually considerable fighting, and as a result the disease gets a start. Take the affected birds as soon as detected and wash the head with a one per cent. solution of carbolic acid, rubbing off the scab as much as possible. Equal parts of vaseline and iodoform make an excellent salve. Apply daily over the entire affected area.

## Tuberculosis

Probably the second disease in poultry most common on the farm is tuberculosis. This affects only adult fowl. It can easily be detected. The bird becomes dull, inactive, has a pale comb, is affected with diarrhoea, loses



Fowl affected with Chicken Pox

difficult matter to state which one is likely to cause the most disease in farm flocks, but judging by observations made and actual experience I should say the second and third named are the most frequent causes to which most of the poultry diseases are due. Poultry diseases can also be classified according to the special section or part of the fowl's anatomy which they attack, such as, one group affecting the head, another group the digestive system, another the skin, and so on.

## The Axe The Best Cure

Our attention at this time will be directed towards those which we find most common in farm flocks such as roup, tuberculosis, blackhead, chicken pox and a few others. It must be borne in mind that I do not recommend treatment for any of these diseases unless the bird be specially valuable, and even then only in the early stages of the disease. The axe is about the best cure, and often if the bird is valuable it is far better to kill it off at once than to run any risk of further spreading the disease. The best example I have had of this was a few years ago when roup broke out in my flock of young turkeys. Only one poult had the disease and there were twenty-seven in the flock. I removed it, and commenced doctoring, but it did not get any better or worse. About ten days later another poult showed symptoms of the disease, and I removed it. This kept on during the greater part of the summer until all but nine had died or had to be killed, after having had the disease from two weeks to a month. Had I killed off the first infected one just as soon as I discovered it the disease might have been stamped out.

At any time when disease is noticed in a flock the cause of it should be determined first, and if at all possible it should be removed. Remove the cause and the cure will hold good in poultry diseases about as well as in any other line of disease. This will also be "the ounce of prevention." The general care and management of the



Method of cutting open a fowl to make a post-mortem examination. Feathers need not be removed. Cut flanks first, then cut in above rear end of breast bone grasping the carcass with the left hand and cutting forward towards the ribs

forms may be taken for one and the same thing as they all have the same origin, but later on each takes on its own form and attacks a special part of the fowl's anatomy.

Ordinary roup can easily be recognized by the sneezing, coughing, rattling in the throat, discharges from the nose, and swelling of the eyes and ducts leading from the nostrils to the eyes. It is due to dampness, overcrowding and draughts over the fowls. It is very common early in the fall in both old and young stock. The remedy is to first change conditions, thus removing the cause. Then put a small quantity of coal oil in the drinking water for the whole flock—just

a gasping for breath, accompanied by rattling in the throat. This form of roup kills very quickly. About the only remedy is to kill off any birds having the disease. Prevent it by removing the cause and giving carbolic acid in the drinking water. These three forms of roup also affect turkeys in the same way. Therefore follow similar methods of prevention and treatment.

## Chicken Pox

Associated with roup we frequently find chicken pox. This disease is known by the numerous warts or scab areas covering the face and head. Underneath the scab is pus. On remov-



Ordinary Roup. Note Swollen Eye

flesh rapidly, later becomes lame in one leg, and if the disease lingers a long time the bird will waste down to skin and bone and become so emaciated that it can hardly walk. On opening the carcasses the liver will be covered with small white spots; these will also extend to the spleen and often cover good part of the intestines. Sometimes small projections like warts to be found on the bones in various parts of the body, especially on the ribs. There is no cure for the disease. It is most common early in the fall after the hens have passed through their laying period, and are about ready to moult or probably in it. At this time they are low in vigor and vitality, and the germs seem to get a hold more easily than when the hens are in the best of condition. Filthy or unsanitary conditions help to develop the disease. Filthy drinking water and water troughs is a very common source of the disease. Kill off all hens showing any symptoms of the disease. Burn the carcasses or bury deeply and cover with lime. Clean out the poultry house thoroughly by removing all droppings and all loose material including two or three inches of dirt, if an earth floor is used. Put in good, clean gravel or sand. If a cement or board floor is used wash it thoroughly and whitewash along with the rest of the building, using hot whitewash having five per cent. of carbolic acid in it. Thoroughly clean and disinfect all drinking troughs and feed pails. Use an abundance of air slaked lime on the floor of the house, especially under the roosts. Also sprinkle this on the earth around the outside of the house. The germ is voided in the droppings of the diseased hen, and is then taken off the ground with feed eaten by other hens. The liver is an important organ in digestion, hence it follows that the liver and intestines both being diseased the germs will be passed off with the droppings. Feed the entire flock Epsom salts, one pound dissolved in hot water and mixed in a bran mash to every hundred hens once a week for a few months. Also add powdered charcoal as a tonic. Observe absolute

Continued on Page 33