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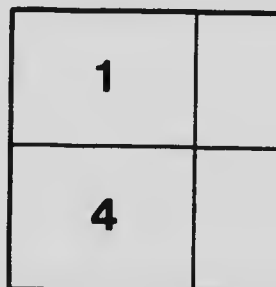
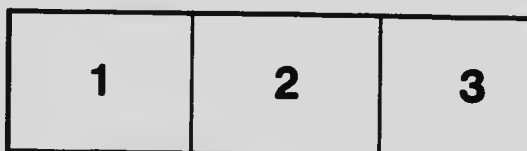
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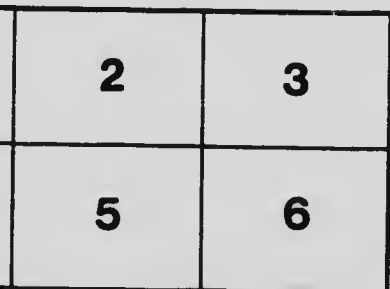
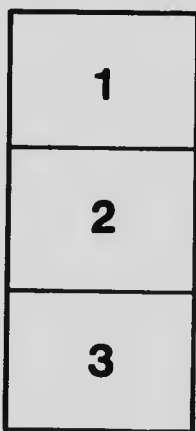
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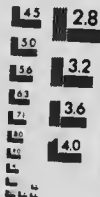
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WINNIPEG :: CANADA

Poultry Department

IMPROVING THE FARM EGG

It is estimated that one and a half million dollars are annually wasted in the Canadian egg trade on account of the improper methods followed in producing, handling and marketing the farm eggs. A large percentage of this loss could be done away with if the farmers would follow a few simple rules.

The first and most important thing to do is to remove or separate the roosters from the hens, or kill them off, as soon as the hatching season is over. Hens will lay just as well, if not better, when the males are removed. The eggs also will be better, as they are non-fertile. If the eggs are fertile and a broody hen sits on them overnight the eggs begin to hatch, or if the weather is warm the eggs will also start to hatch. The greater part of the "bad eggs" on the market are eggs that have started to hatch, so by removing the roosters but very few "bad eggs" will be sold. Fertile eggs cannot under the present system of marketing reach the consumer in first class condition during the months of July, August and September; the weather is too warm and it takes too long from the time they are laid until they reach the consumer's table. They become heated and spoil very quickly. Then again, if these eggs go into cold storage they will not keep but have to be candled out during the winter season as "mouldy eggs" and "spot rots." Thousands of dozens are annually wasted in this way.

By producing non-fertile eggs this loss is done away with. Such eggs will keep better and never spoil during the warm weather. They can be placed in cold storage in the summer and taken out in the winter in almost as good condition as fresh eggs. Since the germs are not fertilized there is no danger of the eggs becoming heated and starting to hatch; they will, therefore, keep far better than the fertile eggs. This is the class of eggs we want our farmers to produce. Therefore, the first and most important step to take in producing better farm eggs is to kill off the old roosters.

Further steps in the improvement of the farm egg are to produce the eggs under sanitary conditions. By this we mean keeping the hen house clean, using clean nesting material and feeding good clean food. The broody hens should also be separated and broken up. This is a comparatively easy matter—simply take a box with a slatted bottom and raise it off the floor so as to allow a free circulation of air under the body of the hen. If she cannot generate any heat under her body she will soon be broken off. The slats should be quite narrow and placed about an inch and a quarter apart. Put the hen in this box and feed lightly for three days, and then let her out again. This is all the treatment required. The eggs should be gathered twice a day during the summer and kept in a cool place at a temperature of between 40° and 55°. Use only clean pails or baskets for keeping the eggs and keep them away from all materials having an offensive odor. It is important that everything surrounding the eggs be absolutely clean. An egg becomes tainted very quickly on account of the shell being porous. Any dirt or filth adhering to the outside of an egg will cause mold to grow inside and the egg thus spoils in a short time. If there is a lack of nesting material in the nests the eggs often break and the other eggs in the nest become smeared. Such eggs, if not properly cleaned, will rot very quickly.

Before the eggs are marketed they should be candled so that only absolutely good eggs will be sold. Eggs can be easily tested or candled by darkening a room with tar paper over the windows. Cut a small round hole in the paper and hold each egg up to this. If the egg is clear and has a small air space it is a new laid egg. A

stale or old egg has a large air space and a cloudy yolk. Heated eggs, cracked eggs and other inferior eggs can be determined at a glance. All the eggs should be graded as to size and color and all the small eggs should be used at home. The standard weight of a dozen market eggs is twenty-four ounces. The eggs should be marketed at least twice a week during the summer season. Only good strong cases and clean serviceable fillers should be used for shipping eggs to market.

In outlining the various things to do in improving the farm egg, we know that there are a few points which need attention before the farmer can realize the prices for high class eggs which they should have. In this connection it might be stated that the eggs go through too many middlemen's hands before they reach the consumer, and each one is endeavoring to secure at least a reasonable margin of profit. The route from the farm to the consumer's table must be shortened. Then there is the lack of discrimination in regard to quality. Practically not a single country store pays a premium on guaranteed eggs. This is wrong and is probably the most serious drawback to the improvement of the egg trade. If the farmers cannot get the price for their guaranteed eggs at the local stores that they should have, they should organize and ship to the larger markets where a premium will be paid for high class eggs. Why should the farmers receive only 15 cents a dozen for their eggs at the local store when the consumers in the larger cities have to pay 25 cents for those same eggs ten days later? Simply because the system of marketing is wrong and the farmers are not organized. On the Winnipeg markets guaranteed new laid eggs, stamped on the large end, sell at from two to five cents a dozen more than the ordinary eggs. If the farmers would simply organize a co-operative egg circle, produce their eggs as herein outlined, and in addition guarantee each egg to be new laid and non-fertile, they could increase the revenue from the egg basket at least twenty per cent.

There is a very good demand on all the larger markets for just this class of eggs, but a second grade article has to take its place until the producers are educated how to get better farm eggs. We find that the consumers are willing to pay a few cents a dozen more

for eggs of a quality that can be relied on in preference to buying eggs of questionable quality. Any farmer alone could develop a splendid trade for guaranteed new laid eggs, but the cost of marketing on a co-operative basis would be less than for each producer to market his own eggs. Then, too, by co-operation, the producers can secure trade which one alone could not get, and quantity as well as quality can be supplied.

If the farmers of this Western country would each conduct a systematic campaign for a better farm egg on his own farm, and then get together and properly organize for handling and marketing the farm eggs, we would in a few years have the standard of the egg trade a good deal higher than it is at the present time.

Any questions on poultry raising will be answered free of charge by the Poultry Department, Manitoba Agricultural College, Winnipeg, Canada.





