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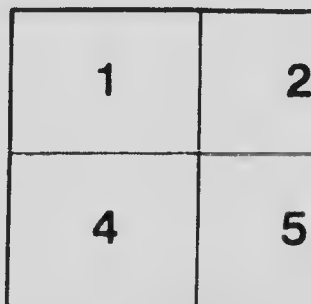
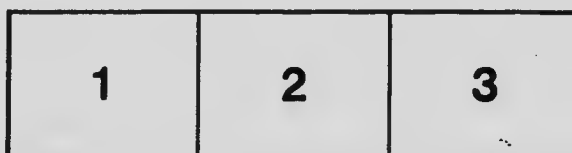
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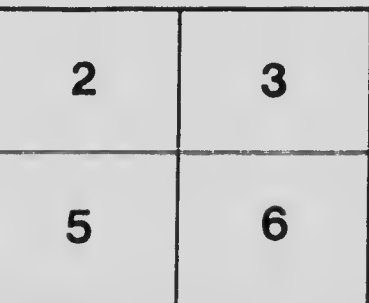
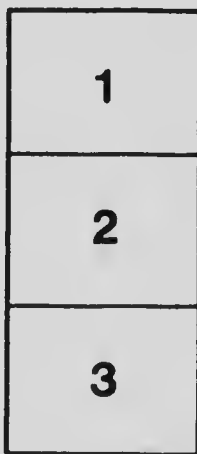
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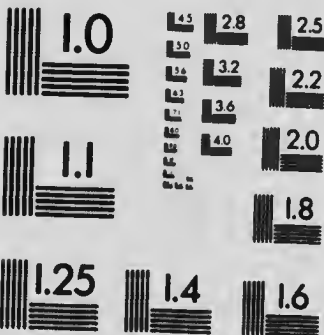
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(June, 1915).

DOMINION OF CANADA—DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
EXPERIMENTAL FARMS.

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POULTRY DIVISION.

TRAP-NESTS

By F. C. ELFORD.

For about ten years the Poultry Division of the Central Experimental Farm has experimented with trap nests, and during that time dozens of different types and styles of trap nests have been used. Out of the whole lot, however, only four are now in commission,—all the rest have been discarded as unsatisfactory.

The discarded nests proved unsatisfactory because of various reasons; some were too big and took up too much room in the poultry house; some were too complicated and were continually getting out of repair. One of the main features in connection with a trap nest is that it must be simple, and the simpler the better. Many of the trap nests were so complicated that it required almost a mechanic to set them up and to operate them. Others were discarded because of the noise they made, frightening the

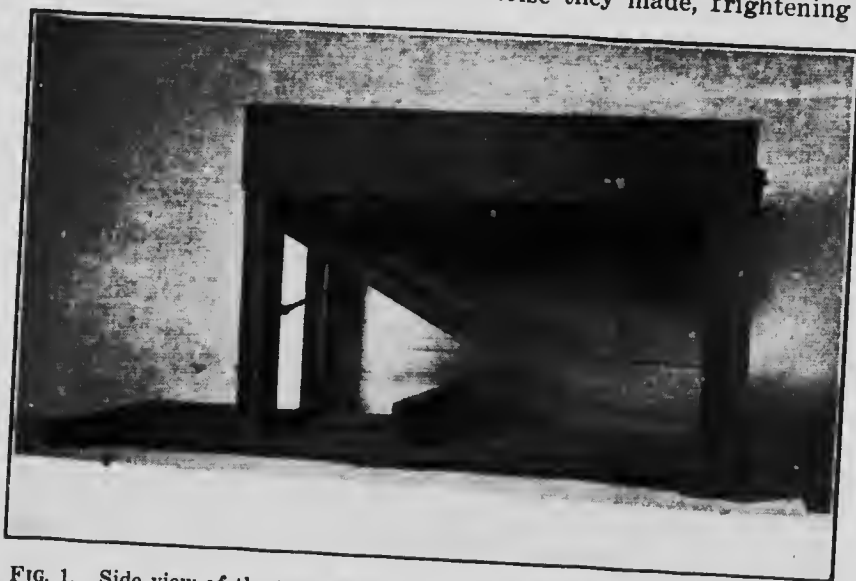


FIG. 1. Side view of the trap nest. This shows the trap set, the door is held open by a small piece of wire fastened at one end. The hen entering the nest raises the door with her back which releases the wire, and she is locked in as the door drops.
Inside Dimensions: Height 13", depth 22", width 12", space between the door and the board forming the nest 7". The door is 8" by 8" with a 2½" hole in the centre. There is no catch to hold the door shut but when it is down a hen will put her head through this centre hole and cannot open the door. A nail or block is placed in the corner to keep the door from being pushed outwards by a hen on the inside.

pullets; but the main reason was that they did not trap, and the trap nest that will not trap is worse than no trap nest at all. It may not be possible

to have a nest that is absolutely reliable, in that it never misses, but the nearer the nest approaches this the better.

Of the four satisfactory nests only one is described in this bulletin, as it is the final choice of the four. It is an adaptation of several nests that have been experimented with, and is of a convenient size, simple in construction, easy to handle, and the surest in trapping of any style that has been used on the Farm. In addition to this it takes only a few minutes to make and all the material that is required to construct the trap part is a piece of board eight inches square, two nails, three inches of black wire, and three small wire staples.

WHAT IS A TRAP NEST?—A trap nest is a nest upon which the door is so arranged that when it is set the hen can enter the nest but the act of entering springs the trap or door so that it falls and thereby confines the hen into the nest where she has to remain until she is released. When the hen is let out the trap is again set and is ready for another hen.

WHO SHOULD USE TRAP NESTS.—It is doubtful if the ordinary farmer who is not doing special breeding should consider the instalment of trap nests. Trap nests require considerable attention, not only in the three or four visits required each day, but if a proper account is to be kept it also means marking the eggs when they are put into the incubator, enclosing them in pedigree trays before hatching in such a way that the chicks can be identified when they come out, and also the keeping of a continual record of the chicks throughout their lives and from one generation to another.

This is too much for the ordinary farmer or poultryman to look after, but for the specialist breeder and the man who breeds for egg production and who has the time and the inclination to carry out his record work, the trap nest is absolutely essential and is the only true indication of what individual hens produce.



FIG. 2. Section of trap nest placed under drop boards. Four nests as they appear when occupied, two with the door or trap set and a hen entering one.

Farmers can breed up the laying qualities of their flocks by using the trap nests from November first to say March first or until they become too busy in the Spring, and take the birds that lay well during this time and mate them with a good vigorous male of a laying strain, and from these only take eggs for breeding, or, if this is not practicable, buy each year a

male bird from a good laying strain and mate him with the best hens of the flock. It is poor practice to breed the whole flock, good and bad, but the purchase of such a cockerel each year pays as the male is more than half the flock in the production of eggs, but be sure he comes from high laying females, and it is best to go back to the same breeder each year for the males.

This is the practice through which the Poultry Division of the Experimental Farm hopes to assist the flocks throughout the Dominion. At the Central Farm laying strains are being established, cockerels from these strains are being supplied the Branch Farms and Experimental Stations where they will be bred to the females kept there and cockerels from these matings will be sold to the farmers in the vicinity.



FIG. 3. Front view of removable trap nests, made in sections. As this section is made there is neither top nor bottom, these being supplied by the drop board and a stationary bottom which also projects far enough in front to form an alighting board.

ADDITIONAL USES OF THE TRAP NEST.—The trap nest also shows the time of the year at which the eggs are laid. One hen that lays 100 eggs may be more valuable than another hen that lays 150 because of the time of the year at which she lays them. Eggs in the Winter time are worth from two to three times as much as they are worth in the Summer time. The trap nest shows conclusively not only the hen that lays the largest number of eggs, but the hen that lays the largest number of eggs at the right time of the year. Trap nests are good in that the daily handling of the hen makes it possible for the attendant to get acquainted with the individual birds. Broodiness, sickness, injuries, etc., can be noted at the start and steps taken to guard against them. Hens that lay undesirable shaped eggs, small or wrinkled eggs, can be detected and weeded out. There is an occasional hen that enters the nest regularly but that never lays an egg, and only the trap nest will spot such hens.

HOW MANY NESTS.—In using trap nests, a sufficient number must be provided or the hens will lay on the floor. As a rule during the heavy laying season there should be at least one nest to every four hens. During the slacker periods, more hens might be allowed to the nest, but it is important that these nests be visited frequently, especially in the forenoons when

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most of the hens lay. It is well to release the hens at least three times before noon, and it is also a good plan when pullets are put into laying quarters for the first time that the trap nest be on hand before the pullets seek elsewhere for a nest. When the young pullet has found a nest for herself in the corner or under the drop board and the trap nest is afterwards introduced, it is very difficult to get the pullet to leave her own nest then to go to the trap, and it is also a problem to get hens that are persistent in laying in the straw to take to the trap nest. Nothing but perseverance on the part of the attendant will accomplish this and he should, whenever he finds a hen laying outside the nest, pick her up and put her in, whether she has laid or not. This done repeatedly without any excitement very often leads her to mend her ways.

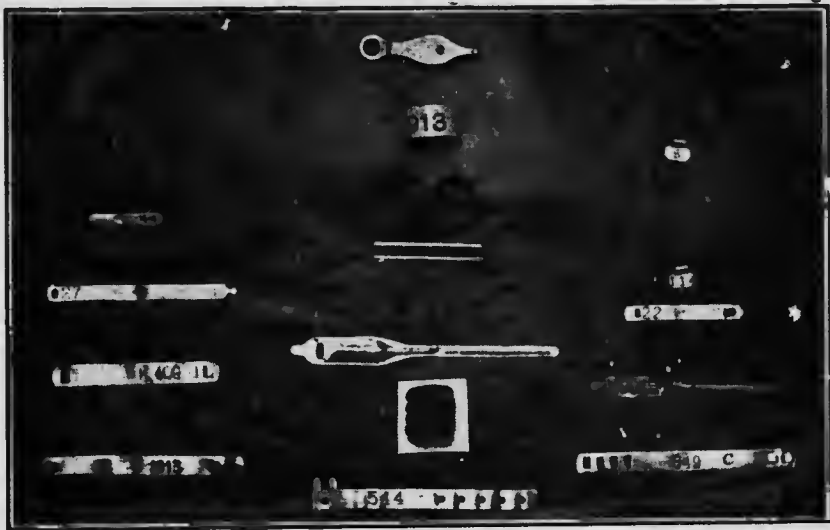


FIG. 4. Leg bands, various styles and sizes to fit the chick or turkey. The figure at the centre top is a toe punch.

LEG BANDS.—When trap nests are used it is necessary to have the birds marked so that they can be distinguished by numbers or otherwise. The most common way of doing this is to leg-band them, either with metal bands giving a number, or, as is practised at the Experimental Farms, they may be numbered with coloured celluloid bands. These bands are in ten colours and each colour represents a figure. By this means the number of the hen can be told without close examination, that is without picking her up and looking at the small leg band to see what number is there. As the hen is released from the nest the attendant at a glance sees the combination of colours and immediately knows the number of the hen. These coloured leg-bands are especially valuable if any particular hen is wanted from the flock. Those who use the numbered bands know what an inconvenience it is to examine each hen to find out the individual that is required, but with the coloured bands she can be picked out from the rest of the flock quite easily.

One of the difficulties with leg-bands is that they become displaced and are lost, and this has been the experience to a slight degree with the coloured celluloid bands above referred to, and, where pedigree work is being carried on systematically, the loss of several bands in a year interferes to no little extent with the value of the work, so this year a double system is being introduced. The coloured bands are used for convenience in the general trap-nesting, but to insure accuracy a numbered sealed metal band is also being used.



