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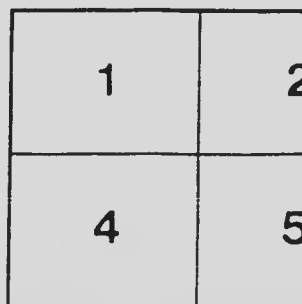
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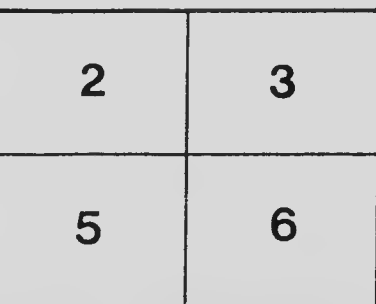
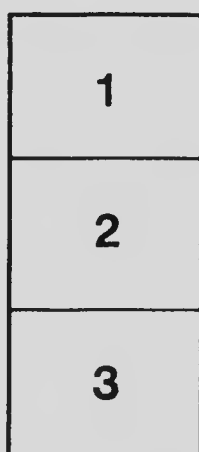
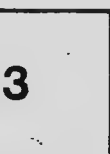
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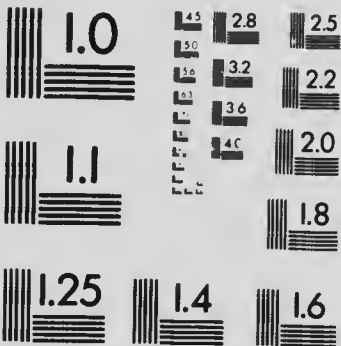
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HOW TO RID A HENHOUSE OF MITES

BY

GEORGE ROBERTSON,

Assistant.

In the warm weather there are frequent inquiries as to why hens stop laying. In some cases the hens have laid very well all season, but suddenly the egg yield begins to fall off and sometimes ceases entirely.

It is useless to expect a flock to lay equally well at all times. A flock that has laid heavily during the winter will generally slow up towards the middle of the summer and when they begin to moult, but when the egg yield drops rapidly until it practically ceases without any apparent reason, suspect vermin.

RED MITE.

Of all the many varieties of vermin that infest fowl, the Red Mite is the most troublesome. Unlike the ordinary hen louse, they are not, as a rule, found on the fowl, neither are they killed by dusting, as the ordinary body louse is; these pests breed very rapidly especially during the hot weather, usually in cracks containing filth or in dirty nesting material. They are not red in colour as is popularly supposed, but grey; it is only after they have come into contact with the fowl and have become filled with blood that they appear red. The young mites are white and have only six legs, but after casting their skins, which they do several times, they have eight legs. The cast skins may be seen like a white powder around the perches, this often being the first indication of the presence of mites. They are able to live and reproduce for months without animal food, the first food of the young probably being filth or decayed wood. They thrive best in dark, dirty houses, and have been found to exist in houses the following season after the fowl have been removed. They usually attack the birds at night, but are sometimes found on laying hens and they frequently drive broody hens from the nest. They pierce the skin with their needle-like jaws and suck the blood, after which they retire to the seclusion of the cracks and crevices of the roosts, nests or other parts of the house. They will bite man or other animal, causing severe irritation, but they never remain on them for any length of time.

REMEDIES.

If the fowl are not doing well and on examination are thinner than they should be, a sharp lookout should be kept for mites. At night they may be seen either on the fowl or running along the perches; in the daytime examine the cracks and crevices of the roosts and walls closely, or lift the roosts and examine the places

DOMINION EXPERIMENTAL FARMS.

J. H. GRISDALE, B.Agr.,

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where they come in contact with the supports. If mites are found to be present, the first step in banishing them is to give the house a thorough cleaning. Remove all droppings and old nesting material, scrape and sweep out every particle of dirt and burn it. Then if you are so fortunately situated that you have water pressure at your command, turn on the hose with as much pressure as you can get, forcing the water into every crack; if as is the case on most farms, you cannot use this method it is advisable to scrub down the walls with a brush or old broom, but in any case they should be thoroughly sprayed or painted with a good strong disinfectant. This wash should be repeated in a few days to destroy the mites which hatch after the first application. The disinfectant may be applied with a hand spray-pump or, if such is not available, a brush will do, but in either case the fluid should be used liberally and every crack flooded.

DISINFECTANTS.

Fresh air and sunlight are wonderful disinfectants and, combined with cleanliness, are preventatives against most of the ills of the poultry yard.

One of the very best disinfectants to use against mites is made as follows: Dissolve one pound and a half of concentrated lye in as small a quantity of water as possible. It will be necessary to do this two or three hours before it is required, as the lye should be cold when used. Put three quarts of raw linseed oil into a five-gallon stone crock and pour in the lye very slowly, stirring meanwhile. Keep on stirring until a smooth liquid soap is produced, then gradually add two gallons of crude carbolic acid or commercial cresol, stirring constantly until the resulting fluid is a clear dark brown. Use two or three tablespoonfuls of the mixture to a gallon of water.

The foregoing is offered as a most effective remedy against mites; but those who regard the preparation of the mixture as too much work may use a good strong solution of "Zenolenn" or any other creolin preparation.

Ordinary coal oil will kill the mites, but as it evaporates quickly the effects are not so lasting. An excellent "paint" to apply to the roosts and nest-boxes is composed of one part crude carbolic to three or four parts of coal oil.

Even after the house has been cleaned, the cracks in the roosts and nest-boxes should be flooded at regular intervals throughout the summer either with the fore-mentioned "paint" or with coal oil. This will go far to keep the pests in check, but it must be regarded simply as a check, and the thorough or annual house-cleaning described above put into effect as soon as possible.

To facilitate the ease with which this house-cleaning is done, all fixtures such as roosts or nest-boxes should be made movable. If they are stationary at present, advantage should be taken of the first rainy day to change them. It will be time well spent.



