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PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

(LIVE STOCK BRANCH).

POULTRY-KEEPING ON A CITY LOT.

By J. R. TERRY, CHIEF POULTRY INSTRUCTOR.



In recent years probably no one topic has caused so much discussion or elicited so many diverse explanations as to its origin and solution as that of the "high cost of living." It is our present intention to endeavour to show how this problem may be partly met or solved by the "keeping of poultry on the city lot, back yard, or garden."

Much pleasure and profit are oftentimes afforded householders by keeping a few fowls, whereby they can secure fresh, wholesome eggs, and now and again the best meat obtainable, by killing off their surplus stock.

In any city there are very few yards so small or so situated that a few fowls could not be profitably kept. When considering such a question, the chief points to be remembered are sunlight, reasonable space, shade, and good drainage. There are, certainly, other points almost as important, but the above are those that should be mainly considered at the outset.

Quite a few would-be poultry-keepers are deterred oftentimes by the fear that the space at their disposal is not large enough. True, a back yard or garden only a few feet square is not of sufficient area to permit of the profitable rearing of stock, but providing the utmost care is taken as to cleanliness and attention, there is no reason why a few hens should not be successfully kept.

LOCATION OF HOUSE AND YARD.

When building, always endeavour to locate the house as far from the dwelling of owner as possible. (We refer now to where it is proposed to keep fowls in the ordinary back yard of, say, 50 or 60 feet wide by perhaps 30 to 50 feet deep.) There are good reasons for this. Chief among these are those of a sanitary nature, and that the dwelling-house may not obstruct sunlight entering the pen or house of fowls.

Always enclose the yard with wire netting, and this to be not less than 6 feet high. Where wire is not used and the fowls allowed to run through your own and neighbours' yards, gardens, or front lawns, unpleasant consequences invariably arise.

If the lot is surrounded by a board fence, a wire netting 2 or 3 feet wide may be strung along the top of the fence, securing the same to scantling or poles nailed to fence.

If the owner desires to use part of the yard for a vegetable-garden as well, a dividing fence of netting should be put up, and by having the whole lot wired the fowls may be allowed access to the garden after the vegetables have been removed. This will afford the owner an opportunity to clean up and spade over the poultry-run in the meantime. A good stiff broom should be used for sweeping, and air-slaked lime should be strewn over the run before it is spaded.

TYPE OF BUILDING.

For the Coast District and adjacent islands an open-front house may be used. In the interior a front composed of either coarse cotton, movable glass, or a combination of both, is preferable.

The type of house proper in any locality may be the same, and may be built according to owner's ideas. These are the types generally used:—

Woods house, a semi-monitor, or, in other words, the roof on the south side starts from a point usually 2 feet lower from the ridge than the north side; this

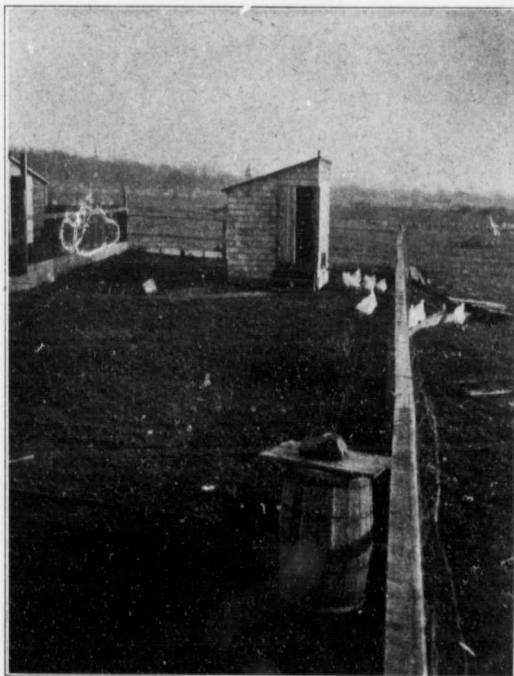


Illustration shows shed-roof house, with enclosed yard of 100 square feet per bird. If possible, fowls should be given plenty of range in addition, as depicted. House is raised 2 feet to ensure dryness and as protection from rats. Barrel shown in foreground is used for storing hen-manure.

allows windows to be placed perpendicularly in the portion above; windows should be hinged for the hot weather. Tolman house, with an uneven roof, having generally two-thirds of its area sloping to the south and the rest to north. The southern roof also comes down a foot or two lower than the north side; the common shed roof, with slant to north; the combination roof, which is practically a Tolman house reversed, so that the south roof is smaller in size than the north; the gable, etc. Of the roof types enumerated, the shed roof is generally cheapest to build. Where

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driving rains are experienced, it is advisable to place a hood in front of opening. If possible, the door should be in either the east, south, or west side, and, where not much light is obtainable, a window may be put in either the east or west side.

A board floor is generally used, and it is advisable to build the house up off the ground a few inches, to avoid dampness and harbouring of rats. In severe climates the houses may be banked up with stable manure or earth during the winter.

A foot board should be placed in the doorway to prevent the litter from jamming the door, and this will also save considerable snow-shovelling in winter.

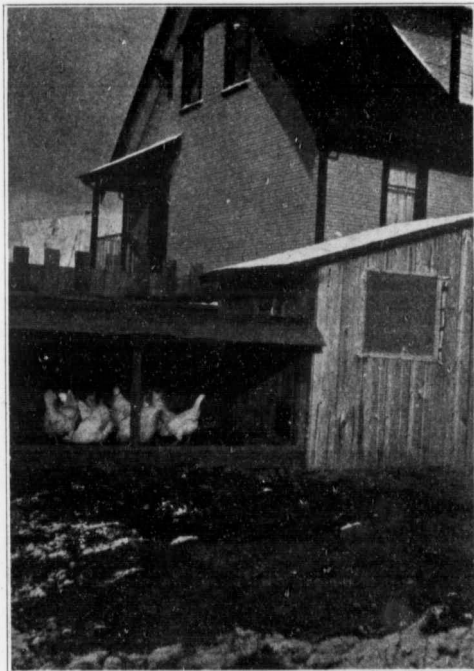


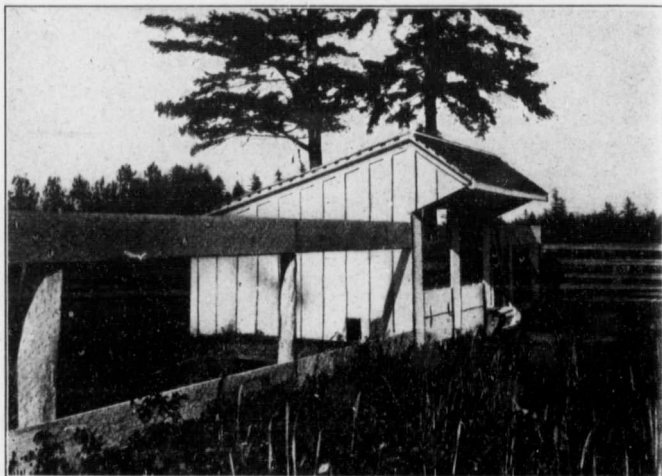
Illustration shows converted woodshed, with open-front scratching-shed built on. House at back shelters sheds from north winds.

Where the house is located near a fence or building to the north of it, thereby offering protection from wintry winds and storms, it need not be built so deep as when erected in a more exposed position. In any case, it should not be less than 8 feet deep in Coast and island sections, and not less than 10 feet in colder regions. Where the fowls are confined to the house during the winter they should be given at least 6 square feet of floor-space each. In milder sections 4 feet may be found satisfactory.

During the hot summer months shade should be supplied in the yards, either by natural growth, such as corn, sunflowers, artichokes, etc., or by cotton screen or board shelters.

EQUIPMENT.

Very few fittings will be needed. The fewer the better. See that all are portable. Roosts, of 2 x 3, or barked poles, may be placed running east and west, and from 9 inches to 1 foot space allowed for each bird, according to breed. A droppings-board, 2 feet wide for a single roost, or 3 to 3½ feet for two roosts, should be placed under roost. The droppings-board should not be more than 2 feet from floor. This should be cleaned every few days, or not less than twice weekly, and the board strewn with dry earth, lime, or liquid disinfectant. The house interior should be limewashed once yearly, all fittings being removed at same time. The roosts may be painted with creosote or tar to prevent the breeding of red mites. In severe climates a dust-bath box should be provided. It should be so placed that plenty of sunlight can play upon it. It should be about half-filled with earth, with which has been mixed some powdered sulphur. It may be necessary to raise the box on legs to prevent litter getting in. Nest-boxes should not be less than 14 inches square, inside measurement, and about one nest to from three to five birds allowed. The nesting materials should be frequently changed, and burned when removed. A water-pan, preferably enamelled, should be placed on a board at least a foot above



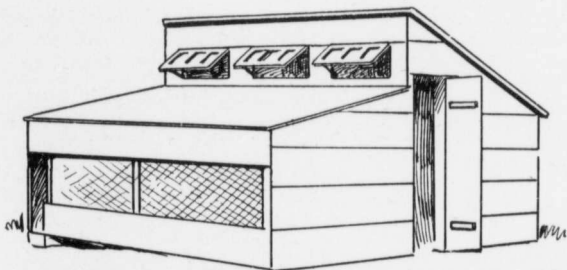
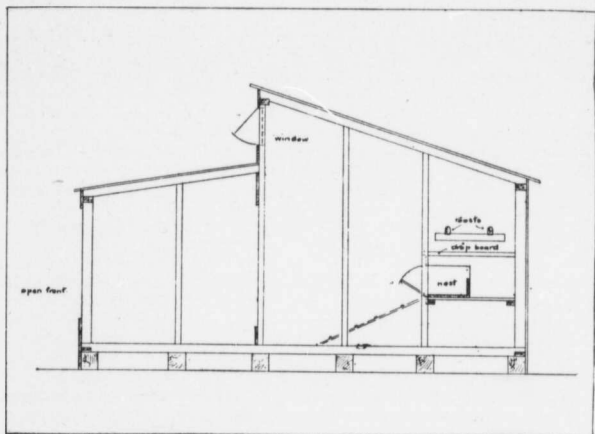
Cut of shed-roof house, with hood attached for shelter against driving rains; open-fronted. the litter, the board being broad enough to allow the bird standing-room when drinking; a grit and shell receptacle; and, if desired, a dry-mash box, or trough or board for wet mash. A board for wet mash is preferable. It is much easier to clean than a trough.

The simplest and best form of dry-mash hopper is just a plain box, any size or depth, with the top removed. A lath should be nailed all around the top, flush with the outside edge. This prevents birds from scratching out the mash.

BREEDS TO SELECT.

Choose one of the popular breeds, and, above all, get healthy, vigorous stock, and buy only those of a good laying strain. If one finds it difficult to make a choice, it is advisable to visit a local fair or poultry-show, and then select.

If one wishes to buy mature stock, the best time to buy is between the months of July, August, and September. If pullets, then the months of September, October, and November will be found most suitable. Where the owner does not intend to rear chicks, but will secure layers by purchase, no male bird is necessary. On the contrary, they are a detriment and expense. Where a male is needed for breeding purposes, it should not be kept after the close of the breeding season, unless a show specimen. All males should be killed or marketed soon after the middle of June. The Department's bulletin, "Natural and Artificial Incubation," supplied free on application, fully describes methods to be adopted when owners wish to rear their own stock.



Woods house line cuts.

Above all, purchase from reliable breeders. The writer cannot urge too strongly on this point. It is courting almost certain failure, and consequent disappointment, to purchase stock from dealers and hucksters. Very few of the latter-mentioned people can supply you stock that will give satisfactory results. Numerous instances have been brought to the writer's notice, where fowls of uncertain age, and suffering

from almost every known poultry-disease, have been palmed off on unsuspecting people who have bought generally because the birds are secured at a price at which reliable breeders cannot afford to sell.

By writing the Secretary, care of Department of Agriculture, Victoria, a list of members of the Provincial Poultry Association will be forwarded free, giving a full list of breeds kept.

FEEDS AND FEEDING.

Wheat should form the staple food, and, with all other whole grain, should be fed in deep litter to promote exercise and health. During the winter months cracked corn may be fed to advantage, feeding it in equal proportion to the wheat. Good plump outs are excellent as a change feed, and should form the majority portion of whole grain during the winter when mature hens are kept over. The amount to feed is best judged by the owner. Care should be taken to see that very few grains are left at a reasonable time from feeding. The times of feeding may be set to suit owner. Where a dry-mash is fed, it is not necessary to feed more than twice daily, morning and afternoon. It is important, however, that the feeding periods should be punctual and regular. Especially is this so during the winter months, when the birds naturally seek the roosts earlier in the afternoons.

Where it is not intended to raise chicks, a wet mash, consisting of table-scraps, dried off with ground cereals, may be profitably fed. Care should be exercised in feeding table-scraps, however. Salted meats of all kinds, pickles, mustard, or pepper, are feeds of a doubtful character. Trouble of a diarrhoeal and ovarian nature arises very frequently from feeding such material. Fat meats, potatoes, or peelings should be given sparingly. Peelings, if fed, should be cooked, and mixed with bran or shorts. A wet mash may be fed in the morning or at noon, rather than at the evening meal. The latter should be of whole grain. The wet mash may be composed of table-scraps (if large, they should be run through meat-mincer) and a sufficient quantity of bran, ground oats, or shorts, so that the mixture may not be too sticky. To provide variety, boiled whole grain may be fed occasionally instead of a wheat-mash. Oats, barley, or wheat are very palatable when treated in this way.

Clam or oyster shell and charcoal should be always before the birds.

To keep the birds in condition, to get fertile eggs, and, incidentally, to reduce the feed bill, green food should be supplied daily. This may be lawn-clippings, dandelion-leaves, cabbage, kale, rape, clover, alfalfa, chick-weed, sprouts, or mangolds. It is absolutely necessary that green food be fed regularly in some form or other.

The dry mash may consist of a mixture of any of the following, compounded to the owner's liking: Bran, shorts, white middlings, corn-meal, and ground oats, wheat, barley, or rice. Where sufficient table-scraps are not forthcoming, fine-ground leaf-scraps should be added, the latter to consist of not more than 15 per cent. of the ration. This mash can also be fed as a wet one if desired.

Unless considerable yard-room is available, and also taking the losses by cats, rats, etc., into consideration, it is much cheaper to purchase pullets or mature stock annually than to rear them.

Pullets at six or more months of age may be considered purchased at a reasonable price if secured for not more than \$2.50 or \$3 apiece. Yearling hens may be bought at from \$1 to \$2.50 each, according to quality, breed, and age.

DISEASES.

Fowls in good condition, fed and treated rationally, very seldom suffer from disease. It does not pay to doctor sick fowls, excepting on very rare occasions. This only when fowls are very valuable and needed for exhibition, or when they are suffering from slight colds or accidents.

All the contagious diseases, such as roup, colds, tuberculosis, "black-head," enteritis, cholera, chicken-pox, canker, gleet, etc., may be successfully warded off by preventing draughts, infection from other diseased fowls, supplying sunlight,

keeping droppings-board clean, replenishing litter when needed, and removing same when soiled, regular sweeping of yard, spading same after sprinkling lime all over, and supplying permanganate of potash in drinking-water at all times.

In conclusion, the writer feels assured that if householders in all of the cities, towns, and villages of the Province could be persuaded to keep a few head of poultry in their back yards where none at present are now kept, large sums of money would be kept within the Province, instead of, as at present, leaving it for the purchase of imported eggs and meat; yards that are at present non-productive could be made to help solve the vexed question of the high cost of living; and the poultry industry of the Province could be placed on a still higher plane than it has at present so proudly secured.

BULLETINS AND CIRCULARS ISSUED BY LIVE STOCK BRANCH, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

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- .. 11. Poultry-keeping on a City Lot.

REPORTS.

Second International Egg-laying Contest.

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