

BREEDS OF CHICKENS

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THE word "poultry" is used in speaking collectively of fowls (chickens), turkeys, ducks and geese. Fowls are originally from Asia. Geese and ducks are from Europe. The only kind of fowl that is a native of America is the turkey. The wild jungle fowl of India is believed to be the progenitor of all domestic fowls.

If you wish to call fowls chickens no harm will be done. Fowls are chickens if you do not spell it with a "U." One hen does not amount to a great deal, but all the hens in the United States produce so many eggs and so much poultry each year that the money value of the wheat crop last year was less than the value of the products of the hens. These products—eggs and poultry—were estimated by government officials as worth over \$600,000,000 in the year 1908. Think of that! Then think of this: The poultry products of Oregon last year were enough to pay for all the appropriations made by the Legislature for two years. And still there are large quantities of eggs imported into the state. There are many different kinds of chickens, some better than others, some poorer. When we speak of a certain chicken belonging to a certain breed we mean that they fill the requirements of that certain breed as laid down by what is known as the American Standard of Perfection.

For practical, or useful purposes, fowls may be divided into four classes: 1. Egg breeds; 2. meat breeds; 3. general-purpose breeds; 4. fancy breeds. The most noticeable characteristics of the egg breeds are small size, active and nervous, early hatching, poor setters, good foragers, and sensitiveness to cold. The chief representatives of the egg breeds are Leghorns, Minorcas, Spanish Andalusian, and Hamburgs. The characteristics of the meat breeds are large size, gentle disposition, slow in movement, poor foragers, easily confined, poor layers, late in maturing, and persistent setters. Brahmas, Cochins and Langshams are the principal meat birds. The general purpose breeds are of medium size, fair layers, good table fowls, and more active than the meat birds. Plymouth Rocks, Wyandottes, and Rhode Island Reds are of this class. Bantams of various varieties, Polish and Silkies come under the head of fancy breeds; they are raised chiefly for some peculiarity of form or feather without regard to useful qualities.

There is more difference in the hens than in the breeds; it is true that there are some differences in breeds in egg-laying. Experiments that have been made tend to prove that the Leghorn will, on an average, lay