POULTRY FACTS

CHICK SEXING IS NO FAD, MYSTERY

Plan May Be Costly to Most Farm Flock Owners.

By H. H. Alp, Poultry Specialist, College of Agriculture, University of Illinois.—WNU Service.

"Sexing" baby chicks, the latest innovation in modern poultry raising, is no longer a fad or a mystery, but it may be of limited value to the general run of farm flock owners. Interest in the question is at the peak when the baby chick season is at its height.

Buying sexed chickens so as to get only pullets and no cockerels may be justified in certain instances. On the other hand the flock owner should weigh the increased initial cost of the chicks, the heavier losses from mortality as a result of the higher cost of the chicks and the loss of income from the sale of cockerels.

How cockerels help reduce the cost of raising pullets is shown in the 1934 records from 37 Illinois poultry flocks whose owners kept records in co-operation with the college. Most of these flocks were Leghorn. For every pullet placed in the laying flock in the fall, there was an income of 40 cents from the sale of cockerels. Thus the cockerels on these farms reduce the cost of raising each pullet 40 cents.

Mortality loss is another factor which weighs heavily in deciding whether or not to buy sexed chicks. In many instances chick mortality runs as high as 20 per cent. In a cockerel-pullet flock this is not extremely serious. However, a 20 per cent death loss in a flock composed entirely of pullets would be much more serious because pullets usually are valued higher than cockerels.

There is no mystery or secret about chick sexing. It is merely the turning out of the vent of newly hatched chicks for the purpose of looking for a small prominence smaller than the head of an ordinary pin which is located at the edge of the vent. Any well-defined prominence is a fairly accurate sign of a male chick. This method or technique of making this examination varies somewhat, but it takes considerable practice to do the work accurately, quickly and without harm to the chicks.

Ground Cobs Are Popular for Brooder House Litter

Ground corn cobs have become quite popular as a litter in brooder houses for chicks the past few years, reports John Vandervort, poultry extension specialist of the Pennsylvania State college.

Grinding the cobs into pieces from one-quarter to one-half inch in size is recommended. This litter, just as all litters, should be stirred every other day so that the droppings will work to the bottom. It is also important that this material be covered with papers or bags the first few days.

Some other litters commonly used are shavings, peat moss, cut straw, sugar cane, peanut shells, dried sawdust and hay chaff. The materials should be free from dust, must and molds and should be changed as often as necessary to keep the house clean and dry. Each poultryman should decide which is the best material for him to use, considering cost, sanitation and labor necessary in cleaning.

Off-Colored Poults

In the best of Bronze turkey flocks, a few light-colored, or slate colored poults occur each year. There has been much speculation among turkey breeders as to the cause of this variation. It can scarcely be due to atavism because White or Slate turkeys have not been used in the make-up of the Bronze breed, the Bronze having been derived from the wild turkey, and the White and Slate in turn established from sports of the Bronze. Many breeders believe that they are the result of an intensive breeding for color and it is alleged that where they are used as breeders their offspring usually are of better color than those from the better colored breeders.—Missouri Farmer.

Poultry Notes

All classes of domesticated and wild birds are susceptible to coccidiosis.

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Nebraska farmers have reduced the number of hens and pullets on farms.

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There is no profit in treating sick chicks. Disease outbreaks should be prevented.

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If fine quality eggs are preserved properly they can be used satisfactorily six to ten months later.

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Expert Warns of Worm Damage

Severest Outbreak Foreseen by Leading Entomologist in Illinois.

By W. P. Flint, Chief Entomologist, Illinois State Natural History Survey.—WNU Service.

One of the most severe outbreaks of army worms that Illinois has had in recent years is threatened, and farmers should be on guard to protect their crops.

Although the outbreak will be spotted and will not occur in all sections of the state, severe damage will be done in many areas. It will be well to keep careful watch on all heavy stands of grain or heavy bluegrass pastures and get the worms before they cause serious damage.

While army worms may destroy entire areas of bluegrass pasture or fields of small grain or young corn in a short time, they can be completely and cheaply controlled by the use of poisoned bran baits. The bait that has been most generally used has a base of one pound of paris green mixed dry with 25 pounds of bran. When this is thoroughly mixed, there is added three gallons of water in which two quarts of cheap molasses, preferably black strap, has been thoroughly dissolved.

A new bait, with which J. H. Bigger, field entomologist of the Illinois state natural history survey, has been working during the past year for cutworm control, uses oil instead of water and molasses. This bait is made by thoroughly mixing 25 pounds of bran and one pound of paris green or white arsenic. Then two quarts of a light grade oil of an S. A. E. 20 viscosity is added. No water or molasses is used. The bait should be thoroughly mixed so that the oil gets on every particle of the bran.

Early Fighting of Moth Important to Fruit Men

The codling moth can almost certainly be counted on as the number one apple insect pest this year, asserts a bulletin from the United States Department of Agriculture. Growers spend enormous sums to combat it, but this pest has become increasingly destructive, according to Lee A. Strong, chief of the bureau of entomology and plant quarantine. Strong attributes this increase to the greater age of apple trees, to the abandonment of some orchards and to weather favorable to moth development.

A great many codling moths have been wintering in cocoons in crevices beneath the loose bark of trees, in coarse trash on the ground, in containers used to handle wormy fruit and in packing sheds. Cleaning up all these places while the moths are inactive is the ounce of prevention that is worth many times over, the pound of cure in the form of insecticides. Measures other than spraying, therefore, are very important. One of the best, Strong says, is a thorough housecleaning of orchards and packing houses early in the season.

Examine the Clover

Red clover cut for hay in 1934 and left over for 1935 may prove to be a serious disappointment, warn agronomists at Purdue university. They say that very often root borers are present when clover is left for the third year, which will destroy the crop. Farmers are advised to watch their clover carefully in the early part of the growing season. If plants begin to wither and the stand starts to thin out, it will be advisable to plow up the clover and seed to soy beans or some other crop. If the clover keeps right on growing, with no sign of injury, the crop should be saved.

Large Udders

Cows of high production almost invariably have large udders and, as a rule, the udders of such cows remain large throughout most of the lactation period. The size decreases somewhat, following each milking. Extending forward from the udder on the under side of the body are the milk veins which carry blood from the udder toward the heart and in high-producing cows usually are large. They ordinarily increase in size from first calving up to maturity. A well-developed, large udder and large milk veins are good indications of dairy capacity, although they are not infallible guides.

Care of Berries

To produce at their best, berry bushes must be properly pruned and trained. In general, the aim in pruning should be to accomplish two things: First, to remove old canes which have produced their crop and are, therefore, of no more value to the plant, and to cut off the tips of new canes of certain varieties which have borne fruit; second, to provide a supply of new shoots for berry production the following season. The system will vary with varieties and according to the wire trellis support used.

Canadian Sourdoughs Seek Legendary Cavern of Gold

One of the most amazing gold hunts in Canada's mining history is planned by Alberta prospectors.

Without proof that it even exists, hardened sourdoughs are planning to hunt the many hills of the White Court area for the legendary "gold cache" of Old Moostas, seventy-nine-year-old Indian, around whose marled figure a legend of fabulous riches and superstition was weaved by prospectors several years ago. At that time he saved a tribe of Indians from starvation by bringing back a "bag of gold" from the secret cache in the hills.

Moostas believed that the gold was put in the cache by the "Great Spirit" for use only in time of dire need, and died without revealing where it was, and refusing to tell how he found it.

The cache is believed to lie among the hills in the White Court district. It is described as a "prospector's dream—a cave lined with pure gold."

The legend is that although Moostas knew of the existence of the cache for years, he visited it only once. Several years ago, when an Indian tribe in White Court district faced starvation, Old Moostas hitched up two ponies and went into the hills.

Two days later, he walked into a trading post at White Court, dumped a "poke" of gold nuggets on the counter and bought out the store. He distributed the food and other goods among the starving Indians, and then retired to a lazy existence on the Indian settlement.

Then started a long battle of wits between prospectors and the old Indian. For years white men tried to wrest the secret from him. They plied him with questions and made many enticing offers, but the old Indian rebuffed them with stoical silence. For months his every movement away from camp was closely watched, but Moostas never visited the cache again.

Experienced

He—Darling, you don't know how I love you.

She—Oh, yes I do! I've had lots of 'em this way.