

SYSTEM IS WATCHWORD OF POULTRY FARM

Suburban Poultry Farm, Success From Start, Due to System.

By H. S. Harcourt

The McKenna Park Poultry Farm comprising 22 acres of ground is located at McKenna Park on the St. Johns car line. It had its birth in April, 1912, and has grown from 2400 baby chicks at the beginning to about 15,000 birds this year, and from the farm Coe A. McKenna, its owner, has sold \$300,000 of this season's hatchings and \$500,000 worth of eggs for hatching.

He has shipped these eggs as far south as New York and to the north to British Columbia and west to Japan. His flock of commercial hens numbered 800 at this time, and their products are all handled by the O.W. B. & N. Poultry Company for its dining car service. Specially delivered eggs are made. Two hundred dozen a week go to this market.

An interesting place. A visit to the farm would delight an expert and educate a novice in the poultry industry. System is everywhere in evidence. Slovenliness is absent and carelessness taboo. Order is the watchword all around the farm. There are three incubators, one of half which are the abiding place of breeding stock. A portion of these structures are small buildings or colony houses, for the raising of the few birds are kept in them. There are a couple of males to each 35 to 40 females. Some of the buildings house chicks just from the incubators, and are two-story structures with a top floor 500 prisoners. These are part of the 800 commercial layers, none of the number ever being permitted to step "out doors" upon their firm duty and might they are incarcerated, but with plenty of air and abundance of light, like the "fresh air friends" of the human family.

All Mr. McKenna's birds are supplied with a variety of poultry feed. They are given a repeat of sprouted oats mixed half-and-half with wheat.

At 10 a. m. like humans of the agricultural realm, they have a green food luncheon composed of chopped kale or clover or alfalfa.

And here is a diet which is always before Mr. McKenna's poultry. For breakfast they may partake at any time.

Dry Mash Diet. 200 pounds of bran. 200 pounds of middlings. 250 pounds of chicken toiled oats. 250 pounds of white corn meal. 75 pounds of beef scraps. 75 pounds of fish scraps. 50 pounds of soy bean meal. 75 pounds of suet.

These foods are thoroughly mixed, and the feed boxes are never without a plentiful supply of them.

At 1 p. m. comes another mess of sprouted oats mixed with skim milk or kermilk.

At 4 p. m., the last repeat of the day, the bill of fare is not so varied. It consists of a service of three parts of wheat and one of corn meal. But the amount of the wheat which is scattered in the litter of straw upon the floor of the pen. A fine, juicy crop of lettuce is growing in the spacious garden. This is a delicacy reserved for the birds, and if there is a surplus, Miss Pullet may have a tiny mess for her supper. No food is given newly hatched chicks for 70 hours. They have also a 70-hour fast.

Four Incubators Operated. In the hatchery, a concrete building about one-half beneath the surface of the ground, the season's hatchings are hatched. The Candee and three of the Cypher types. The Candee has a capacity of 3400 eggs, and the three Cyphers a total of 1400. On account of the backward season hatching began in February this year, and is now just closing, but ordinarily the season is about a month earlier. The record of the large incubator is about 90 per cent of the eggs are hatched, and the smaller 70 per cent. Charles Gray, superintendent of the farm, says he believes this average is the equal of any poultry yard in the country, and that he has had no losses in the work.

Broods are brought forth about once a month, and eggs begin to crack about the 15th day after setting, and those not hatched three days later are destroyed. The reason for this is that were they to hatch at any time later they would be weaklings and not worth the trouble of raising. They had no strength to crack the shell, and would be puny were they to live.

Breeding Birds Have Liberties. Breeding birds on the McKenna farm are permitted to roam at will. Their selection of the area is limited to a second growth fir and hazel-bush and fern abound. Their nests are in their houses, and with their male consorts, about one to each 25 to 40 females. They are not confined to their heart's content. These are the choice stock of the farm—the Walter Hogans, T. E. Quinsberry's and Tom Barron's types. Each year Mr. McKenna traps the best of the flock, and these and these only are selected for breeding purposes. Mr. Coe declares that "Tom Barron has actually demonstrated, by winning many contests in Europe, Australia and this country, that he has the greatest present day strain of layers in existence," and Mr. McKenna's breeders are selected from these and other noted producers, unless she is a 200-egg bird she is not accorded a place in the breeding group.

"Twelve beautiful purebred Barron hens among 2000," says Mr. McKenna, "are the best records of well over 200 eggs during their pullet year. They are all typical, large English Leghorns, and are well adapted to be the premier of the flock of any large commercial breeder. Not a single one of them ever

some of which he would refuse \$100 each for. He estimates the value of his 32 acres of ground at \$5000 per acre, and declares that he could not afford to run the farm merely for the glory he would get out of it as a producer of show birds. From a commercial standpoint, therefore, he has come in for a money-making strain of fowl, and he is accomplishing this desire by accumulating a great number of the best layers he can breed. Next year the farm will contain 2500 layers and at least 500 brooders. To add to this in this enlargement he has one of the best and most experienced poultrymen he could find in the person of Robert Gray, who, with a couple of assistants, does all the work on the premises.

Much Knowledge Required. "It requires a knowledge of the business to make poultry profitable, but above all it is necessary to be diligent in the care of your charges," says Mr. Gray. "Whether he be owner or merely an employee, he cannot make the industry pay unless the attendant managements are about and secure work a personal interest in every fowl. As for myself, for example, while not boasting, I often work from 5 in the morning until 11 at night, would do this every day if it were necessary, and with such attention and care as is thus given these hens and chickens, the business is made profitable for Mr. McKenna. These long hours, however, are during the hatching season."

Not Hard But Constant Work. Mr. Gray says his work is not laborious as that of a railway grader, but it requires abhorrence of everything but the interests of his broods. Eggs in the incubator must be in an atmosphere of 102 degrees for the first week, 102 1/2 the second and 103 until the chicks appear. These little attentions must not be neglected. They are a necessary part of the poultryer's occupation.

The feeding of the young chicks for the first few weeks is the foundation, upon which the future of the flock depends.

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DEATHS AND FUNERALS 75 STARK—In this city June 23, Mrs. Stark, beloved wife of Emil Stark and mother of Leonard, Peter, and Grace, died at 8 p. m., Saturday, June 23, at her residence at Cedar Mills. Burial at Cedar Mills. Mrs. Stark was 75 years of age.

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