

Advice Given Poultrymen on Getting Birds Into Condition for Exhibition

DOLLING UP FOWL FOR EXHIBITIONS IS NO MEAN ART

Careful Discrimination Is Required in Selecting Birds With View to Uniformity.

DARK HUES MAKE WORK EASY

Most Chickens Accept Bath Requirements Without Voicing Any Special Protest:

Preparing fowls for exhibitions is more of a fine art than is popularly supposed. It involves careful selection in accordance with standard requirements, skilled matching with the view to uniformity, patient training, so that the birds are made docile and anxious to display their points of superiority, plus a thorough cleansing and grooming. The entire job is termed conditioning.

Naturally, dark colored fowls are the easiest to condition. Except for training and grooming, such as washing their shanks and brightening their combs, little is necessary. With white birds, or those having light-colored plumage, such as the buff varieties, it is another story.

All show candidates that are easily soiled must be washed—given a bath. If they are badly soiled two baths are sometimes necessary, one when they are just chosen as contestants and the second time just before they are sent away to the showroom.

WASHING FOWL IS EASY

To the unaccustomed mind the idea of washing chickens may seem difficult. Such is not the case, however, and after a little practice the task is easy to perform. Moreover, the birds take to a bath with the most surprisingly orderly fashion, with few exceptions.

In general, the method of procedure is the same as that of shampooing a horse. Plenty of soft water, moderately warm, good soap, several tubs, some fowls or absorbent cloths, a sponge or dipper for rinsing, padding and common sense are the requirements.

The work should be done in a warm room, of course, because to expose the birds unnecessarily is likely to result in colds. The water should be at a temperature of about 80 degrees. It requires several hours for this drying, therefore it is a good plan to do the washing in the morning so that the birds will have the rest of the day in which to become dry.

DRY BIRDS INDOORS

Make all preparations in advance and have the birds conveniently at hand. No time should be lost between the various operations. The birds should not be taken outdoors until they are dry. To do so may cause them to be chilled. The operator should work fast and at the same time thoroughly. Half-way measures will fail to secure results. For instance, if the plumage is not carefully rinsed after the washing, the washing will be ineffective and cause the feathers will dry streaked and unsightly from the dirty lather which has dried upon them.

Fill two tubs with warm water, ordinary laundry tubs are best. Use the first one for soaping and washing; the second one for rinsing. If the birds are white and the water is colored, rinse them also in a bluing water, use a third tub filled with cold water. No soda should be used as it stains the feathers yellow. The soap should be mild and free from alkali.

NO LATHER ON PLUMAGE

Never attempt to use the first rinsing water as the bluing bath. The plumage must be entirely free of lather or it will not take the bluing uniformly. Moreover, the third tub should be used as a cold plunge; immerse the birds completely, but do not permit them to remain in the water. Use as much bluing as would be used for laundering clothes. The aim is the same—to impart a chalk-white appearance, instead of a yellowish white. If your birds are naturally yellow, especially if they have brassiness on the saddle and neck hackles, no amount of bluing will do any good. Furthermore, any attempt to remove such defects, for such they are, constitutes deception, and is likely to disqualify the exhibit.

Stand the bird in the tub of water or on a board laid across the top of the tub, then, commencing at the head, lather and wash each section thoroughly. Don't be afraid to rub the feathers between your hands. If the bird is wet, therefore limp and pliable, there is no danger of breaking the quills, except possibly the stiff quill feathers of the wings and tail. These should be handled more carefully, although even they will withstand considerable bending.

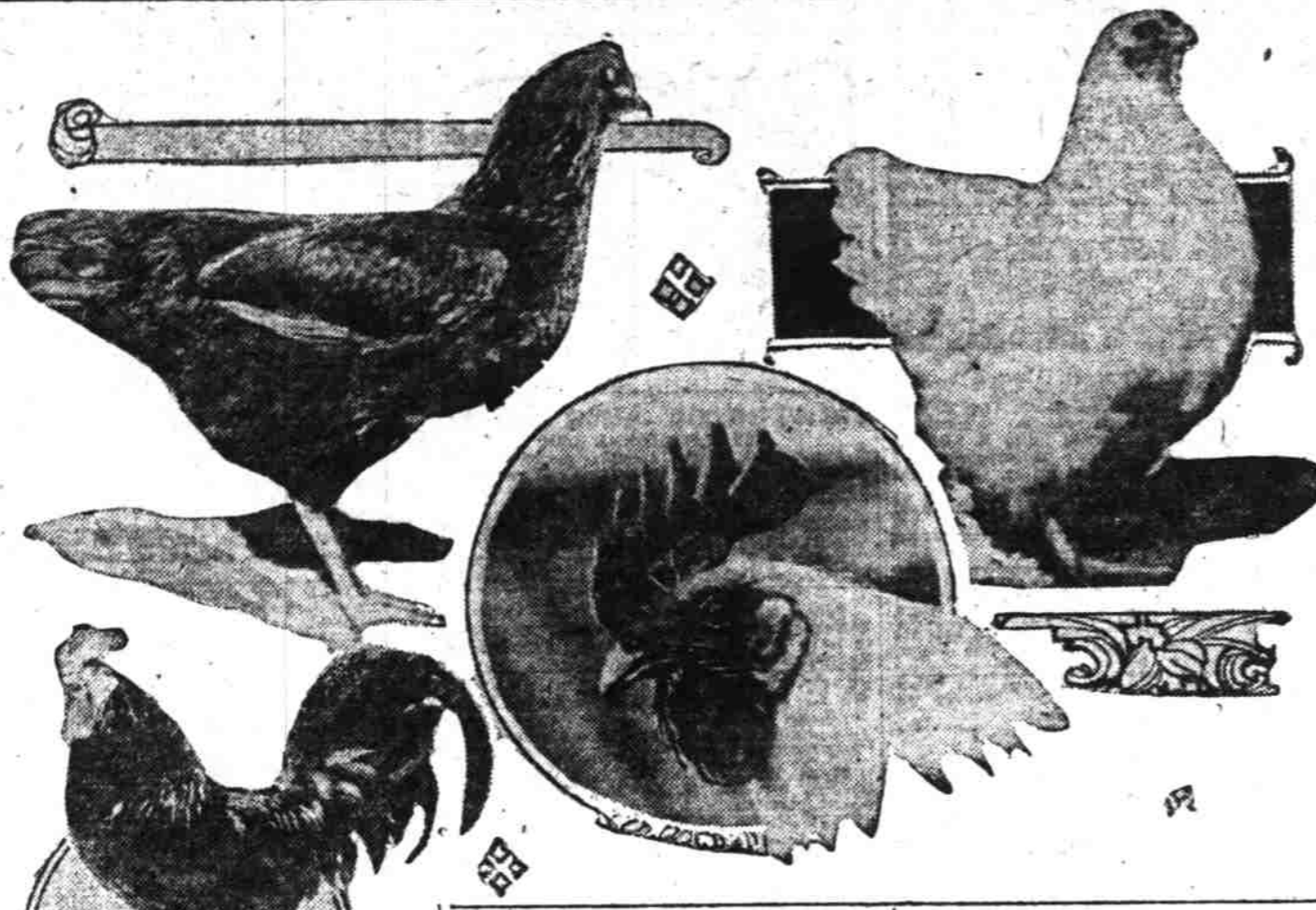
If the first lather becomes sticky, wash it off and lather the plumage again, until you are satisfied that the feathers are clean. Then squeeze the greater part of the water into the first tub, remove the bird to the second tub, and with the aid of a sponge or dipper, thoroughly rinse off the soapy water.

GIVES FLUFFY APPEARANCE

This is the most important part of the work. Agitate and ruff the feathers with your fingers so that the rinsing water comes in contact with every portion of the plumage clear to the fowl's skin. It should be borne in mind that the aim of washing is not only to cleanse the feathers, but to give them a loose, fluffy appearance, so much admired in certain breeds, such as Orpingtons and Cochins, and no necessary to give them a round, full-feathered look. If the feathers are not thoroughly rinsed this effect will not be produced.

When the rinsing is finished plunge the bird into the cold bath or the bluing

SOME OF OREGON'S SHOW BIRDS



Heavy entries are being made for the Portland Poultry and Pet Stock Association annual exhibition. Above are some Oregon birds which have been well conditioned for entry.

bath, remove it, allow the bird to drain for a moment or two, and then wrap the fowl in an absorbent towel or cloth until most of the moisture is taken up. When this is done replace the specimen in its coop, which should be previously replenished with clean shavings, straw or other litter material.

AVOID INTENSE HEAT

If convenient arrange the coops round a stove while the birds are drying. Not too close to a hot fire, however, for too much heat will cause the feathers to curl, which is not desired. On the contrary, it is to be avoided. Another good plan is to cover the sides and back of each coop with muslin or burlap so as to prevent drafts, leaving only the front open for ventilation.

Four or five drops of tincture of acetic acid to each bird is recommended as a preventive against colds, although the chief consideration is not to expose the birds until they are thoroughly dry.

The finishing touches are performed just before the exhibit is shipped. Shanks and toes should be scrubbed with a stiff brush until every particle of dirt or discoloration is removed. A discarded tooth brush is useful for this work. It may be necessary to use a wooden, pointed stick, such as a sharpened matchstick, to extricate some of the bits of grime from between the scales. Do so without starting blood, or you may be suspected of removing stubs, which are disqualifications in clean-legged varieties.

It is not generally known perhaps, but fowls shed the scales on their shanks and toes about the same as they shed their feathers. Therefore look carefully to see that all dead scales are removed. A little oil rubbed on the shanks will help to remove them. A fresh varnished look. The comb, wattles, face and earlobes should be rubbed too, using very little oil, but rubbing it in thoroughly. It gives the tissues a finer texture and more brilliant color. Avoid too much oil, because it will serve as a catch-all for dust and dirt during shipment.

Many exhibitors feed linseed meal, cottonseed meal or other oil-bearing feeds for a couple of weeks before the exhibition, with the view to giving lustre to the plumage. A little sulphate of iron in the drinking water gives the wattles and comb a bright red color, which makes the specimens look well and sprightly. If the contestants are a little under weight, judicious feeding for a couple of weeks will usually bring them up to specifications. Vary the rations so that the birds' appetites are not

damped, using a mixture of some of the following articles: Boiled potatoes, cornmeal, boiled rice, buckwheat meal, barley meal, middlings, ground oats, wheat, skimmed milk and a little beef tallow. At the same time give them sweetened water to drink, and a good tonic or regulator to offset any ill effects from the forcing.

If the birds have lost weight in shipment to the showroom, as they are likely to do, feed them liberally on a regular cooked, and seasoned bologna sausage.

The amateur may consider these finishing touches as being time and effort wasted. Not so. The other fellow, the regular exhibitor, finds them worth while, and remember you are competing against these other fellows. The idea is to go them one better—to win.

By all means use good shipping crates. Do not try to save space or a few cents on expressage by crowding specimens into small crates. There is no economy in it. Use regulation exhibition crates, which can be purchased from the poultry supply houses; or, if you wish to build them high enough for the birds to stand upright, and wide enough for the birds to turn around without damaging their tails. Usually exhibition shipping crates have solid sides, except for some ventilating holes, depending upon the open top provides sufficient air. If the journey is a long one a suitable drinking cup should be attached to the crate, also a package of feed, with instructions for the carrier or expressman for their use. Don't overlook these points on your birds are likely to suffer in transit.

BE A "GOOP" LOSER

To insure identification every specimen should be leg-banded and the number or distinguishing feature of the band should be plainly marked on the entry blank and shipping crate. Label or tag the crates neatly and in strict accordance with the instructions of the show secretary. As a rule exhibitors are well advertised in advance and contestants are advised to apply to the show secretary for premium list and instructions for entry. Then, upon application, suitable tags are forwarded to the exhibitor which designate the exhibit number and so on. A nominal charge is made as an entrance fee. Express charges are advanced and should be prepaid to the showroom.

Enter your specimens with the idea of winning, of making a clean sweep. But, if you fail to win or fall to win, you will have a good sport and take your disappointment gracefully. Mistakes or differences of opinion are sometimes made in judging specimens. There is a showroom etiquette to cover such matters. Appeal, if you see fit, and have the judges explain the circumstances. In the majority of cases they will be able to give you a satis-

factory reason for their decision. Avoid the post-mortem arguments sometimes overheard from those who have lost to a legitimately better-groomed and trained bird.

Grooming, washing and training is not "faking," a term so frequently abused and confused. It is painstaking, a good word to write as a motto over the conditioning room doorway. So long as the natural qualities of the specimens are preserved, with no attempt made to hide defects, conditioning is to be encouraged as highly as possible. It is the secret of the veteran exhibitor's success.

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POULTRY NOTES

GREEN FEEDS IN WINTER

Green feeds, such as sprouted oats, alfalfa meal, chopped alfalfa, and clover hay, cabbage, and mangold beets should be supplied hens confined in small yards, and also to all hens during the winter season, when no green feed is available. Cabbages may be hung up in the poultry house. Beets are usually split and stuck on nails on the side wall of the pen about 1 foot above the floor. Frozen vegetables can be thawed out and fed to fowls, but usually do not keep well after thawing. Clover and alfalfa may be fed as hay, cut into one-fourth or one-

half-inch lengths, or they may be bought in the form of meal.

SROUTING OATS FOR FEEDING

Oats for sprouting are soaked overnight in warm water and then spread from one-half to one inch thick on trays having perforated bottoms, and put into an oat sprouter. Water the oats thoroughly and turn the trays around once daily to promote even sprouting. Artificial heat should be supplied in cool weather by the use of a kerosene lamp or some other means. Use a good grade of oats and allow a square inch of sprouted-oat surface to each hen daily, feeding the sprouted oats on the floor of the poultry house or in the yard. Feed at any time after the sprouts are well started, which usually takes from five to seven days. Keep the sprouter clean and spray it occasionally with disinfectant to prevent the growth of mold spores.

HOW MUCH GRAIN TO FEED

Specialists of the United States department of agriculture advise poultry keepers to feed about 1 quart of scratch grain and an equal weight of mash (about 1 1/2 quarts) daily to 13 hens of the general purpose breeds, such as the Plymouth Rocks, Rhode Island Reds or Wyandottes, or about 18 hens of the smaller or lighter breeds. If the birds are about 7 1/2 pounds each of scratch grains and of mash daily to 100 general purpose range or large yards containing green feed a general purpose hen will eat about 75 pounds of feed in a year, while a Leghorn will consume about 55 pounds in addition to the green stuff which she eats.

CLEANLINESS IS AN ENEMY OF PESTILENT POULTRY DISEASES

Cleanliness is of the greatest importance in keeping lice and mites, fleas and other insects under control, and should have the closest attention. The poultry houses, roosts, droppings boards, brood coops and all other places that keep away lice and mites, yet they make it easier to determine when the pests are present, and help to keep fowls healthy and vigorous, making them better able to withstand and to fight off the attacks of lice and mites. Sick or diseased fowls are always the first victims of these parasites, which makes it important that the fowls be kept healthy.

Of interest is the new incubator regulator which is now in use on many poultry farms in this state. Up to about a year ago the most satisfactory regulator was a thermostat, in the egg chamber which controlled a damper or ventilator, thereby allowing surplus heat to escape. The new regulator has two thermostats, one inside the egg chamber and one outside. These operate finely adjusted levers which graduate the lamp flame as required, from the mere pilot light to a large clear flame. From the outside temperature a warning is sounded which increases or decreases the size of the flame as necessary requires. The change is effected before a change takes place within the egg chamber, and counteract any tendency of the temperature to run down inside the incubator because of cold weather outside. When it is not outside, the regulator turns the incubator flame down, and it is claimed by the manufacturers that the variation in the chamber during the entire hatch is less than one degree.

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POULTRY RAISERS' STOCK READY FOR BIG WINTER SHOW

Oregon Poultry and Pet Stock Association Plans to Stage Great Show Here December 15.

TO EXHIBIT FINE RABBITS

Large Premium List Expected to Attract Prominent Breeders From Entire Western Territory.

By C. S. Whitmore, Editor Poultry Life.

Interest among poultry and rabbit breeders of the west will center in Portland during the week of December 15 and 20, when some of the best stock in the country will be here in competition for the big premiums offered in the Western Winter show.

This will be the tenth annual exhibition of the Oregon Poultry and Pet Stock association and will be staged in the Auditorium, Portland.

The past shows have always ranked high among the big shows of the United States. In a few classes they have surpassed some of the large shows of the East. The Barred Rocks, for instance, that have been brought together here, would have furnished interesting competition for those in many of the noted Eastern shows.

This year's show will bring out Rhode Island Reds in greater numbers and of higher quality than ever before, and the Rhode Island club of America, Western division, and the Northwest Rhode Island Red club have made this their official show. The Western division of the national organization comprises the states west of the Rocky mountains, a territory that is producing some mighty good specimens of this popular breed. In addition to the regular cash pre-

miums, the association offers a fifty dollar special prize for the best display of Reds.

MINORCA BREEDERS COMING

Black Minorca breeders have also made this their official show, and it will be the district meet for Black Orpington breeders. Attractive special premiums will be offered.

The awards will be placed by two of the best known judges from the East and West, James A. Tucker of Michigan, and W. M. Coats of Washington.

The rabbit breeders of Portland declare that they are going to bring out stock that will put their department on an equal footing with the poultry in point of quality, and they are not sure that they are going to be very far behind in numbers. The rabbits will be judged by T. P. Keensy, whose work as breeder and judge has earned the confidence of exhibitors.

The scope of the Portland show has been broadened to include a Commercial Breeders class that will be of real service to this branch of the poultry industry by showing what commercial breeders are doing in the way of raising production standards by trapping and pedigrees their stock. Pens will be shown from some of the best producing flocks of the Northwest and a cash prize of \$20 will be given for the pen laying the highest number of eggs during the week of the show. Cash prizes will also be given on the second and third pens.