

Salem Is Oregon's Baby Chick Industry Center and a Booming Poultry District

POULTRY AND MILK GOATS GO TOGETHER

By W. C. Thompson

One thing that impressed me in studying the problems of English poultry-keepers was the fact that there is not in many parts of the country enough milk for poultry-feeding. I know the same thing is true in some poultry districts in this country.

Practically all English poultry-farmers operate their poultry farms on a permanent grass-sod basis, and that is a most useful factor in making poultry-keeping successful. However, in England, as well as in this country, the problem comes up: "How can one economically keep the grass under control?" It must be kept mowed down, so that the grass will be short, fresh and juicy, if poultry is to make real use of it.

This fact has been a consideration in working out the experiment of which I am to tell you.

At the National Institute of Poultry Husbandry, the milk goat has been called in as a possible aid in solving the two-fold difficulty. I think possibly you will be interested, first, to know what sort of goats are being found useful in this regard. There are three breeds in use at the institute, and these three are numbered among the most important popular breeds in the country generally.

The British Toggenburg is represented, and it is well-known throughout the country as a reliable, hardy, good-milking example of the smaller-size goats. The Toggenburg, a native of Switzerland, is a popular breed of milk goat in the United States. Milk of the Toggenburg is fairly rich, richer than milk of most dairy breeds.

There are a half-dozen English Saanens, pure white goats, also originally from Switzerland. These Saanens, on the average, have somewhat surpassed the Toggenburgs in quantity of milk, but not in quality. The Saanens have been found the best possible type for this particular purpose—that of milk for use principally in poultry securing the largest quantity of feeding.

There is also the so-called British Swiss—black goats with a bit of white on the extremities. These two goats have also done well at the milk-pail. Out in the country, one finds many Nubian goats, more or less lop-eared types, originating in Egypt and those parts of the world.

Many English poultry-keepers here have found the keeping of a few goats insures a constant, fresh supply of very fine milk for the uses of the family, cream where none was afforded before, and a useful lot of skim-milk for chicken-feeding. It has long been recognized that goat milk is excellent for baby-feeding. One thing seems to be sure, and that is that rarely, if ever, does one find tuberculosis among milk goats. Goat milk, then, is safe to depend on for infant feeding.

I found the average milk flow

of goats at the institute to be from two to four quarts of milk a day. The does are milked morning and evening. They are usually very easy to milk, soon learn to stand very quietly during milking, and altogether are very little trouble.

But, to get back to the grass problem. The quick-growing juicy grass of the English pastures is very much liked by goats. The herd of milk goats is pastured first in one poultry-yard for a day and then in another. The goats keep the grass down beautifully.

Inexpensive Shelter

There is scarcely a poultry plant that does not have some shed or poultry-house, some part of which will not be needed during winter days. This will do for the goats. In summer they need little housing—just a shelter that will protect them from the storms.

It is generally customary for goat-breeders to mate their animals in the fall, as goats are much like sheep in regard to natural season of reproduction. The gestation period of the milk goat is about five months. This means that goats mated in late fall will drop their kids somewhere about February or March, which is quite right, especially if you want these goats to supply milk for the baby chicks.

The goats at the institute have all dropped twins, with one exception, and she, a Black Swiss goat, gave triplets. Goats are generally fairly prolific. We found it best to dispose of the little male kids at birth, as there is very little sale for them, and one should not undertake to raise them at a certain expense, only to find them unsalable later on.

The young female kids, if well fed to raise them, after the first two weeks, on a bottle, thus making it possible to force along the mother for milk yield and allow the youngster only a part of her supply. The kids soon learn to eat crushed oats and grass and require less and less milk.

The does should not be bred until they are about 18 months of age, although some are bred at younger age. It is wise to let them attain some size and development before bringing them into milk.

BRIQUET IS GOOD FUEL FOR BROODER

Gasco Briquets Considered
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With the coming of the baby chick season the problem arises among the chicken raisers as to just what fuel to use to heat the brooder during the dangerous age of the new hatched chick. Gasco briquets handled by the Hillman Fuel company of Salem have proved to be the most practical fuel for brooder heating now on the market. Heretofore anthracite coal has been used for heat because of its high carbon content clean and smokeless burning qualities. All anthracite coal had to be shipped from the east and Colorado at a high freight rate which necessitated a high retail price here.

The Gasco briquets, made in Portland, have even a higher carbon content than the anthracite coal, being tested at 95 per cent carbon. The briquets are so made that there is no incombustible material in them, which insures 100 per cent heat and no ash. They are proving popular on the coast, as the cost per ton is much less than anthracite coal and they prove more satisfactory.

MOST PROFITABLE PROVE THE SUMMER AND FALL LAYERS

The production of all poultry flocks during the summer and fall is normally on the decline. We expect the flock to quit laying then—that is Nature's plan. She would, of her own accord, furnish us with a nice flock of culled that would produce during the spring, then go broody and finally rear a family of chicks. We do not want such stock, however, and our aim must be to have stock that will naturally produce during the season most desirable to us—namely, the summer and fall.

I can't emphasize the importance of summer and fall eggs too much. A survey of some commercial farms in New Jersey has shown that the gross value of eggs on well-managed farms is greater during the summer and fall than any other season of the year, even though the total production of eggs is not the greatest at that season.

August was the most profitable month of the year on these farms. The main reason for this, of course, is the rising egg price. The general trend of egg prices has always been upward during the season of hot weather and scarce supply, and it will always be so. For that reason, the summer-and-fall-egg idea is fundamentally sound and is bound to have real economic value.

We have all been chasing the winter egg. Winter production has its place, and it has received much attention. But egg prices are not holding up throughout the winter so well as they should, and with the steady increase in production on the Pacific Coast the chances are that the future will see a lower winter price, relatively, than we have had in the past.

Increase in summer and fall production will not be likely to have quite the same effect on the market as an increase in the winter production, chiefly because of the fact that the weather conditions are unfavorable for the handling of eggs during the summer months, and the matter of quality will always make it possible for a high-grade egg to command a fair price.

And another thing (to quote Andy Gump), it is much easier to increase the winter supply of fresh eggs on the market than to increase the summer and fall supply. Distance from market is not much of a factor during cold weather, while it is important during hot weather. All indications are that the summer and fall market of the future will be the best and, therefore, the aim of all progressive poultrymen should be to cater to it.

Magic in Moist Mash

How is summer and fall production to be increased? To begin with, the body weight of layers must be maintained throughout the spring, particularly with pullets. It is our practice at the New Jersey Experiment Station to feed a moist mash for this purpose. This mash consists of equal parts of cornmeal, rolled oats and a semi-solid buttermilk. With this is mixed enough water to make the feed crumbly.

We feed from three to five

pounds of this mixture daily to each 100 birds, depending upon the size and appetite of the birds. They are always given what they will eat at one feeding period of about 20 minutes. This method is followed throughout the winter and spring, and sometimes into the summer. When laying falls below 50 per cent, however, the regular dry mash is used instead of this moist mash.

In addition to the mash, some milk is fed in a paste form to the birds direct—this is, during the hot summer weather when laying normally is poor. Dry mash is available at all times throughout the year and grain is fed daily—from ten to twelve pounds per 100 birds. Codliver oil is also added to the moist mash at the rate of one quart per 1,000 birds daily. Even the best practices will not do more than add a few eggs, however. Real results will depend upon breeding back of the birds, and that is the biggest problem. A study made at the New Jersey Experiment Station, of birds laying on October 1, showed that out of 514 White Leghorns in laying condition, 312 of them laid over 200 eggs during the past year, 105 laid between 175 and 200 eggs and 97 laid below 175 eggs. That is to say, 80 per cent of the group laid over 175 eggs, which is not a bad record.

At the same time and in the same flock there were 145 birds not laying. Of this group, 26 laid over 200 eggs, 23 between 175 and 200, and 97 below 175 during the year. That is to say, only 30 per cent of these birds laid over 175 eggs. One group was composed largely of birds that were not only laying late in the fall—they had also laid during the year, or they would not have been able to go above 175 eggs.

Birds Inherit Ability to Lay

The other group consisted of birds that did not lay in fall, nor did they lay at any time during the year. If they had they would have been in the 200-egg group or very near it. The few that had produced over 175 eggs were probably small birds that had inherited the ability to lay but did not have the stamina to carry on their good work. The fall layers, then, must have been the good birds of the flock. They not only laid when eggs were high, but they had been producing throughout the year. They had inherited laying ability.

Along with the matter of proper feeding during the fall, then, goes the use of birds of proper breeding. Select for breeders the birds producing after October 1 at the end of their laying year. Cull out of these the birds that are undersize for the breed, or that show outstanding points of weakness. This will remove most of the birds that laid under 175 eggs the previous year or that laid over 200 but have not the desired physical characteristics. Mate such birds to cockerels that have the desired physical make-up and whose pedigrees for several generations are known. This practice will in time produce a strain of birds that will be summer and fall layers as a matter of necessity, provided they have the food. Production will be as natural to them as roosting.

Early-Hatched Pullets

One other method of boosting summer and fall laying is to have

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a flock of early hatched pullets that will begin laying about July 1. These birds will be profitable producers of small eggs during the summer and fall, but will in all probability take a rest during the early winter. They make valuable birds for breeders the following spring, provided one needs to have some early-spring or late-winter hatching eggs. They can not be selected closely, however, as one has not had time to test them out for a full year.

Of the three possible methods of increasing the summer and fall laying, the one of breeding into the stock the ability to lay and keep at it is probably the most important. It is also the hardest to do and the thing which most people will probably fall down on. It takes a persistent poultryman to develop a strain of persistent layers, whereas most any one can follow a feeding schedule or hatch his chicks earlier. Keener competition is going to force some people out, however, and the man with the persistent layers will certainly be the last man out.

Candles give the most attractive lighting for the dining room. Their height depends on the size of the holders, tall candles are best in low standards and shorter ones in those of average height. The candles, always unshaded, are lighted before the guests enter the room.

Now is the time to sow red clover on fall sown grain to give it an early start. If sown on frozen ground or before a heavy rain the seed usually becomes covered but harrowing is necessary if sowing is on dry ground. Usually 10 to 12 pounds per acre are broadcast.

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