

Making the Little Farm Pay

By C. C. BOWSFIELD



EGGs become so cheap in summer that in order to clear any money poultry owners must have a select trade to sell to, or else hatch chickens and supply the market with broilers and roasters. The broiler trade is attractive, as hotels, restaurants and clubs require an almost unlimited supply of these plump chickens about two months old and weighing two to three pounds. To make money reasonably fast one needs two or more incubators and should keep hens enough so that a machine can be filled in three to five days. There will be a supply of eggs to sell each month, but the bulk of them will go into the production of poultry.

Observe the principles of uniformity, freshness, cleanliness. Eggs for hatching should be clean. If not clean they should be washed in tepid water and carefully dried with a clean soft towel. This washing does not injure the egg, but it must be done quickly and carefully or the jarring of the contents may ruin it for hatching. As fast as the eggs are washed and dried they should be covered with a layer of clean cloth or absorbent cotton to prevent their becoming chilled. It is a good practice to stand the eggs in a cool, quiet place, each with the large end uppermost, for a period of twelve hours before placing for incubation. This balances the yolk in the center and locates the air cell.

Eggs waiting for incubation should be kept at a temperature of about 60 degrees F., although they will stand a variation of temperature from 40 to 100 degrees. They should not be allowed to dry out, nor should they be exposed to a current of cold air, steam or vapor. During storage eggs for incubator use should be turned every day.

Hens kept in unhealthful quarters or too closely confined are not likely to lay eggs that will produce strong, healthy chickens. Hens suffering from disease or infested with vermin may lay, but eggs from such hens will rarely hatch, and even if they do hatch the chicks will not be likely to mature into vigorous or growthy fowls.

Hence in order to secure hatchable eggs the hens must be healthy, have plenty of exercise and be fed upon an assorted or balanced ration. An exclusive corn diet will not make for fertility. Fowls in confinement must have a mixed diet and plenty of ground bone, with ments, clovers or other substances in the line of nitrogenous food. It is wise to aim at uniformity in age, size, color and breed. There is a great deal in selection, and this goes back to the parent stock before the eggs are laid. If the flock is uneven the birds ought to be separated into pens so that the eggs taken for hatching are sure to be fertile and from a good strain of hens.

The best pullets hatched every spring ought to be kept for winter egg production. They will begin laying when prices are high. Pullets will begin laying at five to seven months of age, according to the kind of blood in them. Nearly all the pullets hatched in March will begin laying in October or November, just in time to furnish a supply of eggs when prices are highest. A good plan is to bring pullets along steadily without forcing, and they will be good size at six to seven months. Keep the flock divided and do not let males run with pullets the first year or while the eggs are wanted for market. When wanted for hatching let the males run with them, twelve or fourteen hens for each rooster.

It is obvious that the best results economically come from chickens running at large on the farm. With but little attention they gather the greater part of their food, and it is properly balanced at that.

In order to provide a large grain supply at the least expense a nearby tract—say the orchard—should be planted to wheat, the chickens being confined until it has come up well to prevent scratching out the seed. When ripe the birds will attack the crop, doing the reaping and thrashing, with no attention whatever from the owner.

Circular and Flat Beds.

A charming circular bed can be made from a combination of blue clematis and pink gladioli. The clematis is planted in the middle and trained low over the bed on wires about one foot apart and fifteen inches from the ground radiating from the center. The gladioli grow up through the wires.

A simple and lovely flat bed can be made by sowing a carpet of sweet alyssum, Little Gem, white, and dotting it with Lilac Queen.

To Preserve Plants.

A good method of preserving plants that have been transplanted and before their roots have taken hold of the ground is to cover them with inverted flower pots of suitable size. These should be in place only during the warmest and sunniest part of the day. They should not be used on dull days. They prevent the strong sun from scorching the foliage and also help to maintain the moisture in the soil.

THE HOME CANNER.

The home canner is a very important help on the farm, because it saves the waste in perishable fruits and vegetables. With the canner the fruits and vegetables that the market cannot use may be saved to use later on the table and to sell when the market is prepared for these food products. Every farm should have a canner. The home canner is a means of saving surplus fruits and vegetables. It offers a way to keep certain foods during the winter or at times when fruits and vegetables are out of season. Most every farm has a surplus of fruits and vegetables at certain seasons when the market is not prepared to take the products fast enough to keep them from going to waste.

THE DEADLY CUTWORM.

It Has Been Destroying Wheat in Western Kansas—Preventive Measures.

The mysterious worm which has been reported to be destroying wheat in western Kansas is none other than the common clayback cutworm, according to George A. Dean, professor of entomology in the Kansas State Agricultural college.

When the first report of damage was received an entomologist was sent into the infested region. Infestation was found to be confined practically to wheat fields containing much volunteer wheat and to grass lands and alfalfa fields. Unless weather conditions are unfavorable for growing crops, the worms will probably, says the entomologist, cause no great loss of the wheat crop.

Preventive measures are best for controlling cutworms. If the wheat fields are plowed during the summer and the volunteer wheat is kept down until after seeding there is very little danger. Cutworms often migrate from field to field, in which case a good dust barrier should be constructed in which the worms may be destroyed. Where the worms are migrating or are concentrated in a small area, they can probably be killed by using the poison bran mash employed against grasshoppers. This should be sown in the evening along the edge of the field that the worms are entering.

Growing Alfalfa.

In preparing the land for alfalfa it is best to go slow. The first step is to plow the soil deep and prepare it the first year for potatoes or corn, using ten loads of manure per acre, pulverizing or harrowing the land down in good shape. The corn or potato crop should then be kept thoroughly clean for a season. This will destroy weeds and the ground will have time to settle properly for alfalfa. Then the following spring the land should be double disked, rolled and harrowed. The seed can then be sown with an ordinary wheel drill as follows:

Mix, and mix thoroughly, about six pounds of cornmeal to ten pounds of alfalfa seed. The ordinary drill when closed to its finest calibration will sow about sixteen pounds per acre. Thus sixteen pounds of the mixture will mean ten pounds of alfalfa seed. This is considered about the best amount to sow per acre under field conditions.

Another method of sowing is to cover or plug up all but the first, seventh, etc., holes in the drill with the indicator set at the same position as before. This will take about one pound of seed per acre and will put the rows forty-two inches apart, far enough to be cultivated.

Straw as a Fertilizer.

A large amount of straw is shipped from a county in Missouri to a nearby paper and strawboard factory. This straw brings the farmer about 50 cents per ton. A county agent recently found a pile of about 1,000 tons at Sikeston ready for shipment. He computes that as a fertilizer this straw is worth \$2.50 per ton, in addition to its value as a means of adding organic matter to the soil. He is making a campaign of the county in an attempt to show the inadvisability of the farmers selling their straw and urging its more extensive use as bedding in stables and feed lots. Straw used as a top dressing on fall wheat has been found to practically insure a good stand of clover on lands where clover is otherwise grown with great difficulty.

Cure or Kill Trees.

It is very unjust to neighbors to permit trees to grow that are covered with insects or troubled with disease. The disease or insects will spread and finally destroy other trees on the property where they are growing, and the trouble rapidly spreads to neighboring grounds. Either cure or kill. If unable to do the first cut down the trees and burn them, and do it promptly.

A Good Whitewash.

A pound of cheap bar soap dissolved in a gallon of boiling water and added to about five gallons of thick whitewash will give it a gloss like oil paint. Silicate of soda in the proportion of one to ten of whitewash produces a fireproof cement.

Orchard No Place For Hay.

The wise farmer does not try to raise a crop of fruit and a crop of hay from the same land. By so doing he fails to get the best possible results from either. Better put all the attention to the orchard and raise the hay on some other land.

THE CREAMERY OPERATOR.

Both Milk and Cream Can Be Improved by Proper Care.

Creamery operators as a class are vitally interested in improving the quality of milk and cream furnished by their patrons and equally interested in increasing the quantity of these products. That the quality can be improved and the quantity increased there is no doubt, but just how to accomplish these results has proved a perplexing problem, says the department of agriculture.

Creamery patrons as a rule are hard working, industrious men, but many of them do not realize the importance of furnishing the creamery with nothing but clean, sweet milk and cream. They should become more familiar with the methods for properly caring for dairy products economically. Many of them would like to increase the production, but few know just how to accomplish such a result.

The creamery operator who gets nothing but good raw material is always in a position to meet competition and to pay good prices to his patrons, and where patrons get good prices for their product and have high producing cows they are almost sure to be interested and successful in their work. It is evident, then, that the success of both the patron and the creamery are so closely associated that they are practically identical. Every ambitious man is anxious to succeed and will do so if given the opportunity.

The cause of lack of interest and perhaps failure in dairying is largely due to the absence of definite knowledge on some vital points at issue. It seems, therefore, that the creamery is the proper agency for supplying necessary information to its patrons. Many patrons would be glad to improve their methods and frequently resolve to do so, but when they reach the point of outlining a plan they are unable to proceed because they have no example to follow, nor do they know where to go for reliable advice and demonstration. The creamery operator should be able and willing to give the information, for in this way he will advance the cause of dairying in the community and indirectly help himself. He should go still farther, and instead of waiting for requests from his patrons he should take the initiative and go to them prepared to make suggestions that will secure improved conditions. This may be done in person or by use of circulars or letters. The first, however, is preferable, as personal appeals always have greater effect than written communications. Suggestions should be made systematically, beginning with the most important item.

Probably the first consideration would be the care of milk and cream. Advice could be given which if followed would materially improve the quality of the product without making any perceptible increase in the cost. Patrons could be shown the necessity for clean milk and the precautions required to secure such, the importance of cooling milk and cream and how it can best be done and the need for frequent deliveries to the creamery and how the cream or milk should be protected while on the road. The next point for consideration would probably be the production of milk and cream. It is a well known fact that in a few years' time the product of many herds can be doubled. Patrons could be shown the importance of herd records which disclose the amount of profit or loss each cow is making and how to proceed to detect the unprofitable or "boarder" cows. They could be assisted in figuring economical and proper rations and given instruction on the construction of barns, silos and dairy houses and assistance in the selection of animals for building up a dairy herd.

Caging Fowls.

Caging fowls separately for two weeks, while fattening them, will produce tender meat, while, on the other hand, where fowls are yarded they are apt to nag and chase each other, so that the muscles harden and the meat toughens.

ACTIVITIES OF BEES.

What are bees for? "To make honey, of course," will be the answer of ninety-nine out of a hundred. That, however, is not the chief work of the bees. Scientists tell us that they do a still more important work in fertilizing the blossoms they visit. The value of the honey and wax taken from bees in the United States is estimated at \$20,000,000. Some estimate the value of their work as fertilizers at \$100,000,000. All agree that it exceeds \$20,000,000.

Many men have found that beekeeping and fruit growing are practicable when carried on together. It is generally known that bees are useful in pollinating the blossoms of most fruits, even if they are not actually necessary to a crop. They are numerous in early spring when few other insects are present in like numbers. If continued damp weather prevails during bloom they are useful in distributing the pollen and causing the setting of the fruit. The bees need pollen to feed the young in the hive, and the are especially active in that season in obtaining it. They are useful, too, in cross fertilizing such varieties as are sterile unless crossed. It has been demonstrated also that in the cultivation of melons and cucumbers bees are absolutely necessary to good crops. It was long since conclusively proved that bees were not created solely to furnish man with a delectable sweet, but to increase the yield of edible fruits.

THE FARM BUREAU.

Unless farmers are sufficiently interested in farm bureau work to form an effective organization which truly represents the farming interests of the county there is small chance of the county bureau meeting with great success, says the department of agriculture. It is not enough for professional and business men to interest themselves in the work; the farmers must feel that the bureau is theirs, that it is a means by which they can all cooperate in securing for the community at large every possible benefit and not an institution for conferring benefits on them individually. A county organization imbued with this spirit is a necessary preliminary to successful work by a county agent.

HOW TO KILL POULTRY.

Unightly Product Is Caused by Incomplete Removal of Blood.

"Grasp the chicken, when killing, by the bony part of the skull. Do not let the fingers touch the neck. Make a small cut with a small, sharp pointed knife on the right side of the roof of the chicken's mouth, just where the bones of the skull end. Brain for dry picking by thrusting the knife through the groove which runs along the middle line of the roof of the mouth until it touches the skull midway between the eyes. Use a knife which is not more than two inches long, one-fourth inch wide, with a thin, flat handle, a sharp point and a straight cutting edge."

The above instructions on the proper methods of killing poultry were issued by the department of agriculture. At least 30 per cent of all the poultry coming into the New York market is incompletely bled. Much of it is so badly bled that it results in a loss of from 2 to 5 cents a pound, as compared with the corresponding poultry which is well bled and in good order, continues the department. Aside from the bad appearance of incompletely bled chickens, their keeping properties are very inferior. The flesh loses its firmness sooner; its flavor is not so good; the odor of stale flesh and finally of putrefaction comes sooner, and in every way the product is more perishable.

A very large proportion of the unightly poultry in our markets, aside from the rubbing and tearing of the skins, is caused by an incomplete removal of the blood. This is evidenced by red dots which frequently occur where the feathers have been removed, especially over the thighs and wings, or by the small veins, which mar the appearance of the neck. Generally it is the neck which shows most plainly the presence of blood in the fowl, or that a wrong method has been used in cutting the blood vessels in an attempt to empty them. The neck is the first part to discolor, becoming first red, then bluish red or purple and finally green as aging progresses.

Vitality of Seed.

Assuming that every care has been taken to get seed well adapted to the conditions of culture, it is still important to see that the seed is of good vitality and capable of producing strong, vigorous plants. Great waste of land and labor results every year from the use of seed of low vitality.

Poor seed cannot produce good plants, and poor plants give poor returns or none at all. Seed should always be tested before planting and seed of low vitality rejected. Some of this poor seed is introduced to blend with good seed so that it can be sold at a lower price. Some of the worst weeds have been introduced and spread in this way. The loss from weeds and the cost of fighting them is great and is so well understood as to need no discussion.

Farmers often buy cheap seed thinking that they are saving money, when as a matter of fact they are paying two or three times as much for the small amount of good seed obtained as they would pay had they bought good seed in the first place at twice the rate per pound paid for the poor seed.—A. F. Woods, Dean Department of Agriculture, University Farm, St. Paul.

SOME CHICKEN HINTS.

The cripple and the malformed chicken should be put to death immediately after hatching. Such little unfortunates will bring nothing but disappointment. They will give you more care than ten well and whole ones. They will make you sick of the chicken business and give your entire flock a black eye from the first. Kill them the instant they are born.

Lousy fowls are necessarily weaker than fowls that are free from lice. Strength and vitality are quite important factors while the fowls are producing their new suit of clothes.

Corn is a very poor grain when fed extensively. It produces fat at the expense of other tissue, and when laying hens are fed too much corn they soon become too fat to lay.

There is no grain superior to wheat for chickens. It is readily eaten and as a rule laying hens thrive upon it. Those who grow wheat have a fine opportunity to raise chickens and sell eggs, for the fowls may glean the stubble fields and save much grain that would otherwise be lost.

The person who has never fed grit to his fowls will be surprised at the amount a flock of hens will pick up in the course of a year. The feed dealer keeps the best kind of grit, it being ground granite or other kind of rock.

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