

# Farmer, Stockman and Dairyman

## How to Cull the Layers—

Heavy egg laying is correlated with certain visible or physical characteristics of the hen. This has been demonstrated by studies of trap-nest records of individual hens. A knowledge of these characteristics makes it possible, at certain seasons of the year, to cull the poor layers of the flock with a fair degree of accuracy.

Judging and culling by physical characteristics is not as accurate as the trap nest but it is possible to pick out a large proportion of the unprofitable hens in the flock by this method.

Trap-nest records prove that the poor layer discontinues laying early in the season. The hen that stops laying and molts in July and August is, on the average, a poor layer. She will not lay as many eggs in the following year as the hen that continues laying throughout the summer and early fall. Neither has she laid as many eggs in the months preceding. The hens that have stopped laying in July and August should, therefore, be culled. Hens that have made a poor record in the first year will, generally speaking, make a poor record the second and subsequent years.

If trap nests are used it is a simple matter to go over the records and pick out the non-layers. In the absence of trap nests non-laying is indicated by:

1. The shriveled condition of the comb, wattles, and ear lobes.
2. Closeness of pelvic bones.
3. Contracted or hardened condition of the abdomen.

Another indication of non-laying, which may be called the color test, is valuable only with breeds that naturally have yellow skin and shanks; as for example, White or Brown Leghorns and Plymouth Rocks. This test cannot be used on breeds of naturally pale or dark skin and shanks, such as the Orpingtons, Black Minorcas, or Campines. Hens of the former breeds that show distinctly yellow shanks and beaks have not been laying for several weeks. If, in addition to this yellow color, their combs and wattles are shriveled and the abdomen is hard they are certainly not laying. The yellow in shanks and beaks does not necessarily indicate non-laying, but it does indicate that the hen has had a rest period for several weeks. They may have started again to lay and the color not yet become pale. It requires several weeks for the color to disappear.

Non-laying is also indicated by the molting of the feathers. Occasionally, however, a hen may be observed to lay while in partial molt in which case the comb and wattles will indicate a laying condition.

In culling by these methods there will be greater accuracy if the flock has received normal feeding and care throughout the year. Any irregularities in feeding or care, or sudden changes therein, may cause a good layer to stop laying and sometimes to molt early. Where the feeding and care have been normal the culling will be very accurate. If the flock should be producing an abnormally low yield of eggs it would indicate that many good layers had stopped laying.

In the average flock, it is possible, during July and August, to cull twenty percent of the hens without decreasing the egg yield of the flock.

Cull in July, August and early September the hens that show:

- A. Well-developed molting with distinctly contracted comb and wattles.
  - B. Contracted abdomen or dry, puckered vent.
  - C. Yellow shanks and beak.
- Test "A" will usually be sufficient, but sometimes it will need to be combined with "B" to insure greater accuracy. Test "C" alone is not sufficient. It should be combined with "A" or "B."

The above tells how to select the poorest layers. This method, however, does not tell how to separate the medium good layers from the best.

If the poultryman wishes to cull everything but the very best, or those with a capacity of about 200 eggs in a year, he should make the selection from October 15 to November 15 by the following tests:

- Keep those hens showing:
1. Incomplete molt, red comb and wattles, and bright eyes.
  2. Well-spread pelvic bones, good depth from pelvic bones to keel bone, and soft abdomen.
  3. Pale shanks and beak and vent, among breeds that have naturally yellow skin and shanks.

To make the selection with the greatest accuracy, use all three tests. The high price of feed stuffs, as well as the added expense of labor and other items which enter into the cost of producing eggs, makes it imperative that there should be a careful culling of the laying flock if a profit is to be made by the producer. High-producing hens are making a better profit at the present prices of eggs and feeds than before the war. Poor layers that made little or no profit in the period of cheap feed now

show a greater loss than ever on the food they eat.

Culling the slacker hen is in the line of food conservation and helps win the war.—James Dryden, Professor of Poultry Husbandry, O. A. C.

## Quarterly Notes Lane County Agent—

Office calls	774
Letters written	556
Circular letters	438
Meetings held or addressed	19
Attendance	537
Bulletins distributed	1,352

Five poison mixing meetings held. There are twelve certified potato seed growers in the county this year with an average of 62, passing first inspection.

Arrangements made with First National Bank of Eugene to finance the Small Flock of Sheep on Lane County Farms movement.

Steps taken to get interest aroused to obtain Local Federal Labor Bureau here.

Meeting of corn show committee held and arrangements made for another corn show for Lane county.

Small wool pool formed for the purpose of getting details for handling wool under government wool regulations.

Blackleg for fifty head of cattle obtained.

As a result of the office's effort, our Red Huston wheat when unmixed will be graded Red Spring in place of Red Walla and will be graded 5 cents per bushel higher.

Twenty-five requests received regarding purchasing of small flocks of sheep. One hundred and thirty head have been located.

Forty-two farm furloughs were passed on during the quarter.

## Report on Feeding Situation—

The prices on feeds in Portland papers are in large quantities of 100 tons or more. Carload lots run \$1 to \$4 higher.

Alfalfa Hay—Dealers believe that the price of alfalfa hay is pretty well established and late winter conditions will be all that will influence price. Lane County Co-operative price is \$32.

Mill Feed—Cheapest feed at present. Results in demand exceeding supply. Portland mills generally sell only through their agents.

Protein Feeds—All oil meals scarce. Cottonseed selling from \$69 to \$70 in Portland.

Molasses can be obtained later on. In case of poor quality of roughage molasses can be used profitably.

Cocunut meal should be fed at the rate of one and one-half times as much as other oil meals. As high as two pounds of cottonseed meal can be fed with good producing cows.

Hog Feed—The cheapest feed for growing hogs under 100 pounds, according to the Animal Husbandry Department, O. A. C., is one-third shorts, two-thirds ground or rolled barley, supplemented with six to seven percent tankage or skim milk. This is also good for fattening pigs.

## Government Requests More Winter Wheat—

The U. S. Department of Agriculture has issued a call for a large acreage of winter wheat for the coming year as a part of the national production campaign. The last two years' low yields of wheat have been used up and a large acreage is necessary so that a reserve can be created.

The Secretary of Agriculture states that it is highly desirable that the winter wheat acreage over the country be increased 12% and that steps be taken by each county immediately to insure the planting of this acreage.

The farmers of the State of Oregon are being asked to increase their winter wheat acreage 23%. Lane county farmers are requested by government representative to increase the acreage at least 10% if possible. This means an increase in winter wheat of over 1,200 acres for the county.

The increase in winter wheat acreage is asked as one of the most important lines of defense work in the war program.

The price of 1918 has again been assured for 1919.

A large wheat acreage means that a surplus can again be assured for next year.

On the better soils that are drained, the yields of winter wheat outyield spring wheat, according to a five-year averages of the experiment station. When this fact is considered, farmers can afford to co-operate in the government's food campaign which is essential to a successful prosecution of the war for the coming year.

## Selecting Seed Corn—

There are a number of ways of selecting seed corn, but as far as can be determined, the field selection method has proved most satisfactory. This consists merely in taking a sack and going into the field to select the ears. In this way one is able to select ears from desirable plants and does not run the risk of planting kernels pro-

duced on small, crooked or diseased stalks.

The tendency for like to produce like makes this method most desirable if greatest yields are to be obtained. The ear should not be too high on the stalk nor taken from crooked stalks, although in the latter instance the crooked stalk may be due to the wind; but even that shows the crooked stalk could not withstand the wind as well as the straight ones.

As soon as the seed is gathered from the field, some means for its drying should be provided. This can be done in several ways. If one has a mouse-proof bin, it can be done by driving finishing nails on one side of the wall and with a sharp blow sticking the ear on these nails. Wire hooks which will hold from 20 to 25 ears can be obtained from seed houses. A pole stood upright with nails driven into it on which ears can be placed is a cheap and satisfactory method. The pole should be set on a piece of iron pipe, to prevent mice from crawling up to the grain. Probably as economical a way as any is by doubling a piece of twine and making a string of ears by the see-saw method. These should be hung from the ceiling or the beams with a short wire.

Seed corn should be selected as soon as ripe from the best plants in the field and enough selected for two years' planting to insure seed adapted to the locality.

## Applying Manure—

One of the essential features in keeping up and increasing production of land is the economic use of manure. Too many farmers fail to recognize the need of putting manure on the land as soon as it is produced. Instead of doing this, they allow the manure to pile up around the barns during the busy season, when, as a matter of fact, money would be saved by applying the manure as it is produced. The manure spreader is the implement that should be on every farm where livestock is kept, and there should be some place provided where the manure can be applied. There is a reason for this, which is as follows:

In the first place, the sooner the manure can be gotten into the soil the better, because of the more organic matter it will contain. The rotting of manure means waste of organic matter. The chemist will say the loss falls chiefly upon the carbon. Granted, but the carbon and its compounds are needed in the soil for the production of humus, for that slow decay which has to do with the water-holding content of the soil, and makes profitable crops possible. Next the very act of decay in the soil is useful in ways that we cannot understand, much less describe. The decay of organic matter is the work of bacteria, and the presence of these organisms in the soil seems to favor the growth of crops if the carbonic acid gas set free by them is not directly helpful to the plant in securing its food. Besides this, remember that manure loses a good deal of plant food when allowed to decay outside of the soil.

## Save Labor by Seed-Corn Selection—

Saving seed corn saves labor. This is one of the main reasons for careful seed-corn selection, says the United States Department of Agriculture, which points out that just as much labor is often employed in producing full ears as would be required to grow full ears. The more bushels of corn to the acre, the less the labor required to grow each bushel.

To save labor during the preparation of the ground, and the planting, cultivation, and harvesting of the crop in relation to the quantity of corn grown, the wise farmer will now devote special attention to selecting a two-years' seed supply. He will not make seed gathering a merely incidental operation, connected with harvesting or shucking, but will devote his whole attention to the selection of the best ears as they grow in the field, under the conditions the crop has to contend with. By thus using his time this fall he will save the labor of many men all next season.

In other words, says the department, the stalk of corn that produced well under ordinary field conditions, in competition with other stalks, is likely to transmit high yielding ability to its seed. Where field seed selection results in doubling the acre yield, the result is practically equivalent to cutting down by one-half the labor required to produce the crop.

## Moleskins Valuable—

American moleskins, particularly those from the Pacific Northwest, are superior to the moleskins of Europe, which largely make up the world supply for industrial uses, according to biologists of the United States Department of Agriculture. It should be profitable, therefore, the biologists declare, to trap these animals for their pelts and so establish a new American fur industry. This is true particularly in the Northwest, where the animals are large and plentiful, and where it

is often desirable to keep their numbers down to prevent injury to fields and lawns. Such a new industry should be especially desirable for farmers' boys as a side issue, it is pointed out.

The habits of American moles are described and methods of capturing them and treating and marketing their skins are outlined in a farmers' bulletin, "Trapping Moles and Utilizing Their Skins," recently issued by the United States Department of Agriculture. The publication also offers suggestions for the tanning of the pelts, so that they may be made locally into women's neckpieces, muffs, and coats. Copies of the bulletin may be had free so long as the supply lasts, on application to the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

## What the Government Asks the Agricultural Councils and County Agent to Do.

1. Promote improved methods of crop production.
2. Introduce and study new and profitable farm crops.
3. Promote better methods of livestock management.
4. Promote methods of plant-disease and insect control in field, orchard and garden.
5. Encourage farm drainage.
6. Arouse interest in the keeping of farm accounts with view to making farming more profitable.
7. Arrange for farmers' meetings and demonstrations.
8. Promote breeders' organizations.
9. Establish "farmers' exchange" of seed and livestock.
10. Promote co-operative shipping of livestock and sale of purebred stock.
11. Encourage community co-operation.
12. Serve as a clearing house for the activities of all farmers' organizations, and co-ordinate their efforts.
13. Build a more permanent and profitable agriculture.

## Get Rid of "Star Boarders"—

All non-breeding meat-producing animals should be slaughtered. Non-productive animals are to be found in nearly all of the beef herds, many of them five or six years old, that have never produced a calf. These "star boarders" are usually in fine flesh, and because of their beauty and fancy breeding are kept on from year to year. We are now facing the stern realities of war, with an ever-increasing demand for foodstuffs, and there can be no question but that it is the patriotic duty of every breeder to send such animals to the block and keep only animals that will produce satisfactory returns for the food consumed.—George H. Glover, Colorado Agricultural College.

## Prolificacy—

One of the essentials in the brood sow is prolificacy. Those little short-bodied, fine-boned sows cannot be prolific mothers, and if the sow is not a good mother, of what use is she? The good brood sow must have good-sized frame, and this means a good share of bone. While coarseness is not desirable, yet strong bone and good length of body are decidedly essential. See to it that the mammary glands are well developed. There should be no less than 13 fully developed teats. These are some of the points that are prime essentials in the selection of good brood sows. No breeder can afford to breed any but prolific sows. If she has not come up to such requirements, then get all the meat on her that you can and let her go to the shambles.

## Home-Grown Feed for Dairy Cows—

To feed the dairy herds well, with the minimum of grain, substitutes must be furnished for at least part of the grain. With a good pasture during the entire summer and with rich corn silage and first-class legume hay for winter feeding, good dairy cows will yield a heavy flow of milk at a minimum of cost. Clover, alfalfa, cowpea, soy-bean, velvet-bean or other legume hay, when fed with good silage, will maintain a medium production of milk at a relatively low cost. Under ordinary farm conditions it is not to be expected that legume hay will take the place of the entire grain ration, but if it is substituted in part, large quantities of grain will be released for human food.

'Saving food is saving soldiers.'

## Classified Ads

For Sale, Rent, Wanted, Etc.

FOR SALE—A heater. Inquire at Harry Stewart's.

FOR SALE—Good milch cow. Main and Mill Sts., Springfield, Ore.

FOR RENT—A ten-acre tract one mile southwest of Springfield and two and one-half miles south of Eugene. Good house and fair out buildings. All under cultivation. Inquire at 186 Mill street, corner A, or address P. O. box 302, Springfield, Ore.

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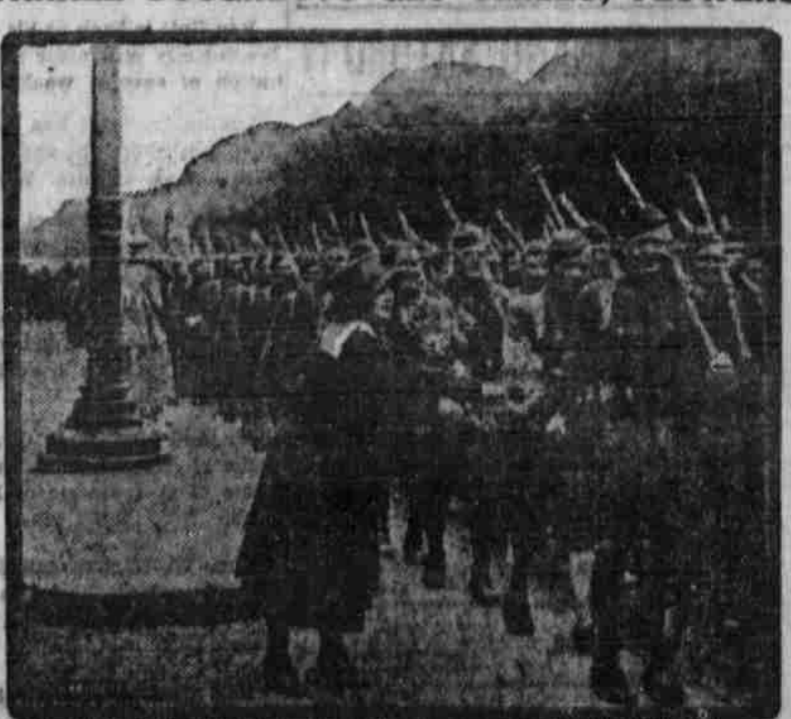
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