

A Weekly Page of Poultry Hints to You

Here is a Department Full of Bright Ideas for Readers of the Home and Farm Magazine Section.

POULTEY houses may be built more open and consequently less expensively in our Southern States than in the North.

However, a house which gives satisfaction in Oregon or Washington will also give good results in Texas or California.

The best site for a poultry house in any location is one where good water and air drainage are available. The floor and yards will then be dry.

The house should not occupy a low hollow in which cold air settles. Whenever possible, a southern or southeastern exposure should be selected, although this is not essential if there is any good reason for facing the house in a different direction.

Systems Are Compared.

There are two popular ways in which to raise poultry, the "intensive system" and the "colony system." The first of these aims to save steps, and accomplishes this purpose. Long stationary houses are used. It is easier, however, to keep the birds healthy and to reproduce the stock under the second system.

Under the colony system, the birds are allowed free range, the houses, however, which hold about 100 hens each, being placed from 200 to 250 feet apart, so that the stock will not kill the grass. This system may be adapted to severe winter conditions by drawing the colony houses together in a convenient place at the beginning of winter, thus reducing the labor during the cold months. The first system is more suited for hens used solely for the production of market eggs than for those used to breed stock.

Few Fences as Possible.

Fences mean an outlay of money, and this outlay is more or less continuous, as they must be maintained after being installed. There should be as few fences as possible dividing the lots and the yards, as land can be kept "sweet" more easily if not fenced, and fresh, sweet land is a valuable asset in poultry raising.

On good soil, a greensward may be kept up by allowing 200 to 250 square feet of land per bird. This means 217 or 174 birds per acre. More space is necessary on poor or light land. A larger number of fowls are usually kept to the acre where double yards are used and the land is frequently cultivated. Plymouth rocks, and the other heavy meat breeds in small yards require fences 5 to 6 feet high, while a fence 6 to 7 feet high is necessary for leghorns. The upper two feet of the fence for the latter may be inclined inward at an angle of 30 degrees, or a strand of barbed wire may be used on top of the regular wire to keep them confined. It is also sometimes necessary to clip the wing feathers of one wing of these birds that persist in getting out. A board or strip along the top of the fence is not advisable. Hens will often fly over such an arrangement.

Paint Helps Appearance.

Posts may be set or driven into the ground. They should be set 8 to 10 feet apart with common poultry netting, or 15 to 20 feet with woven wire. Corner posts should be about 8 inches in diameter, and be set four feet in the ground, while intervening posts may be 4 or 5 inches in diameter and set 3 feet in the ground. That part of the post which is set in the ground may be charred or treated with some wood preservative to advantage, while corner posts should be firmly braced or set in cement.

All buildings and appliances on a poultry farm will be improved greatly, both in appearance and in serviceability by the addition of paint. One may buy read-mixed paints, or may purchase paste pigments and oil and mix them. All surfaces should be clean and dry before they are painted. Use a priming coat made of equal parts of paint and linseed oil and cover with one or more coats of paint, which should be thoroughly rubbed into the surface.

Whitewash Is Cheap.

Whitewash is the cheapest of all paints and may be used either for exterior or interior surfaces. It can be made by slaking about 10 pounds of quicklime in a pail with two gallons of

water, covering the pail with cloth or burlap and allowing it to slake for one hour. Water is then added to bring the whitewash to a consistency which may be applied readily.

A weatherproof whitewash for exterior surfaces may be made as follows: (1) Slake 1 bushel of quicklime in 12 gallons of hot water, (2) dissolve 2 pounds of common salt and 1 pound of sulphate of zinc in 8 gallons of boiling water; pour (3) into (1); then add 2 gallons of skim milk and mix thoroughly. Whitewash is spread lightly over the surface with a broad brush.

Feed Breeding Hens.

When large numbers of eggs that will hatch well and produce strong chicks are desired, breeding hens must be well fed, both as to quantity and quality. One should not expect to get high production from hens which are not abundantly fed without gradual weakening of the stock.

One of two things must happen when fowls are fed too sparingly—the developing ovules will be reabsorbed, or, in the case of fowls in which the laying characteristic is strongly inherited, the hen will use material in the form of food which should be used to build up the body tissues in the manufacture of more eggs.

In the latter case, egg production cannot keep up but for a short time, because the bird rapidly loses strength. An abundance of food is therefore one of the necessities where a continuous egg production and strong chicks are desired.

Provide Plenty Feed.

Don't make the mistake of thinking you can half feed your hens and make a success of the poultry business. The wants of the hen's body come first. If there is any surplus it goes into the eggs. Where there is no surplus there are no eggs. It is your business to provide enough food for both the body and the eggs.

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