

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.

ELIMINATING WEAK STOCK.

THE first principle to be adopted in the successful handling of poultry should be to eliminate weak stock whenever we see it. This applies at all stages of development from the baby chick to the mature fowl. The chick that shows physical weakness at any time should be killed or be distinctly and permanently marked and kept apart from the strong stock, later to be marketed, if worthy. A chicken may overcome weakness, so far as external appearance show, and will retain the inherited tendency to weakness. It is well known that certain physical weaknesses are transmissible from parent to offspring. The best safeguard against transmitting weakness in a breeding flock is the elimination of all stock that shows or has shown weakness. Sometimes this may mean the disposal of the entire flock and starting with strong, new blood.

The action of a fowl probably indicates best its physical condition. The physically weak is inactive and dopey, and is more likely to squat than to stand. It does not scratch or forage actively. It is the last to get off the perch in the morning and the first to go to roost at night, and frequently is found on the perch during the day. The loudness and frequency of the crow of the male, or the song and cackle of the female is a reliable indication of strength. The weak fowl seldom crows or sings, and is less likely to do so when in the presence of a strong individual of the same sex.

Scratchings

THE shape of the body is closely related to the health and physical vigor of the fowl. The deep, thick, compact body, with large fluff, shows greater vigor than the slender, long-jointed, more delicate body of the same fowl, which is one of the safest guides in selecting fowls on the basis of vigor. For example, a fowl of low vitality is likely to have a long, thin beak and head; a long, thin neck; long, slender body; long, thin thighs and shanks, and long, thin toes. The reverse is true of the physically strong. To examine a fowl in detail for physical vigor we may begin at the head. This, in the physically strong, should be fairly short and broad, while in the physically weak it is more likely to be strong, flat and thin, with long, flat beak, producing a "crow-headed" appearance.

An innovation that has come to stay is the dry mash. If you have never had anything to do with hens since you were a boy, the dry mash may awaken many doubts in your mind. It won't seem the orthodox way. You will remember how you used to boil a big kettleful of small potatoes, and then mash them up with meal; and how you used to wade through the snow to the henhouse to feed the steaming mass to the hungry hens. That was the good old-fashioned way. But your hens will do just as well (and you will do a great deal better) on the dry mash. It doesn't entail a quarter as much work as preparing and feeding a wet mash.

When fowl cholera occurs there is very little chance of effecting a cure by internal dopping of birds that actually have the disease, is the opinion of R. F. Kaupp, pathologist at the Colorado Experiment Station. As to treatment of the henhouse and yards should be cleaned thoroughly. The house and, so far as possible, the yard should be sprayed once a day with a 5 per cent solution of carbolic acid, or similar disinfectant. Birds should be watered from drinking fountains, and these should be cleaned and disinfected once a day, using a disinfecting solution of the same strength as for house and yards. The feed should be given in troughs, which are so constructed as not to allow stepping into them. These should be cleaned and disinfected once or twice a day until the disease is stamped out. As the germs escape through the discharge, the sick birds should be isolated as soon as it is noticed they are ailing. Kill and burn the carcasses, or at least keep them separated from the rest of the flock to

prevent further distribution of the germs. As treatment, sulphocarbonate tablets containing the sulphocarbonate of calcium, sodium and zinc have given us the best result in our experiment work.

The farmers and poultry breeders in the vicinity of Mott, N. D., have organized a co-operative poultry association. Each farmer will guarantee his eggs. They will be stamped with his number, so that in case a bad egg shows up it can be traced to the farm it came from. The association will in turn guarantee the eggs. The plan is to sell direct to the consumer. Already a firm in an eastern city is trying to contract for forty cases a week.

An egg-laying contest for the championship of the world has been suggested as a feature for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition to be held in San Francisco in 1915. The suggestion comes from A. D. Dunieliff, Jr., of Sydney, N. S. W., honorary secretary of the Australian laying competition, who has submitted his plan to I. D. Graham, assistant chief of the department of livestock of the exposition. The competition as proposed by Mr. Dunieliff would begin in November of this year and end in November, 1915. The prospects are that the contest will be held.

There is real need for some plan that will place the new-laid eggs at once in the cool temperature that is necessary for their preservation. There also is need for a campaign of education that will reach the farmers and inform them how eggs should be cared for and the necessity of rushing them to the cooler at once. Perhaps the butter and cheese factories that are scattered over the country could be made agencies for egg collection as well as milk collection. It would at least have the merit of taking the eggs away from the farmer every day, and as a cool room is necessary for butter, a moderate extension would do for the cold storage of eggs until shipped to the large warehouse.

Poultry Hints

IT IS ESTIMATED that five chickens will yield a pound of feathers.

You should be able to select from your early hatches this month the stock that will make the best breeders, and the culls can go to market as broilers.

The growing chick that has free range in the orchard will make good growth and will also destroy lots of bugs, worms and insects which would damage the fruit.

Do not hold ducklings after they are ten weeks old, as they rapidly grow to bone and muscle after that time and make undesirable market carcasses.

This is the season when lice hold conventions in the hen houses. Keep busy with the insect powder and the white-wash. Clean the houses and roosts as often as possible.

Lice multiply rapidly in hot weather if nothing is done to check them. The dusting will help greatly. Spade up a spot in a shady corner and watch the hens enjoy themselves.

If there are no friendly trees or bushes, shade can be easily provided by four posts over which a piece of chicken wire can be stretched and cover with an old piece of carpet or similar material.

Beware of the hidden nest. It is not uncommon for farmers to take the eggs from a hidden nest and put them in the fresh egg basket. As one has no way of knowing the age or condition of such eggs, there is a great risk in such a procedure.

Cull your flocks as the chickens grow. When you note a particularly promising specimen that is full of life and vigor and growing all the time, leg-band it and note how it develops. You ought to know your best breeders from chickhood to maturity. It pays.

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