

Better Poultry for 1915

By G. L. Wood, Poultry Editor.

THE poultry industry, from the man who raises a baker's dozen in his back yard to the big egg plants can look forward to great things in 1915. The industry is going ahead by leaps and bounds and it rests with the men who are actively engaged in it as to whether this advance will be permanent and secure. Poultry is the only meat consumed as food that has not had its proportion of recent price raises. The reason for this has been that beef and pork are the every-day meat rations for every nation. Chicken has always been more or less of a dish for Sunday dinner and company. It has not had the excessive demands that other meat has enjoyed. But the high price of beef which has now touched and passed chicken meat in many instances has put the poultry industry in a new light. If beef cannot be produced cheaper; if it is true that the formerly available grazing lands in the United States are being rapidly cut up into farms, and displacing the feeding places for large quantities of stock, and that everywhere the production of beef on a large scale is being rapidly and surely curtailed, then the poultry industry has reached the stage where it will soon come into its own.

What man is going to pay more for beef and pork than chicken? Just what do you suppose will happen to the present supply of marketable poultry when chicken becomes no longer a luxury but an every-day meat for the table? The opportunity for producing poultry on a large scale is not affected by the causes that are limiting the production of beef and pork. The small farm is just the place for raising it in any quantity desirable to the breeder. But if this is to be done for a profit every farmer and breeder who would have his profits sure must see that his poultry is rapidly put on the most vigorous basis possible.

There is everywhere the complaint that hens do not pay for their feed, that fertility runs low, that it is impossible to raise even 50 per cent of the hatched chicks, and that the quality of the stock is not improving in the least. I want every person who is having any or all of these troubles to find in the following suggestions something that he can apply to his own case. It is not only necessary that you read how to improve your chances for success, but ten times more important that you put every one of the suggestions possible that would apply to your case into action.

Cull your stock and cull it closely. Small undergrown specimens, birds with pinched tails, fowls out of all proportion to the standard requirements of the breed, and any other birds which would not be a good, healthy, vigorous breeding stock should be discarded and sent to the market. The best of your female breeders this past year should be retained and mated to large, vigorous cockerels from heavy egg laying strains. It does not matter what breed you are raising, there is some reliable breeder on the coast who is developing the egg qualities of this particular breed. If you do not want exhibition specimens, you can secure large, vigorous breeders for five dollars each, that will be worth many times this amount to you in building up a profit-bearing flock.

The main point is do not be too afraid to cull. Remember, the closer you cull the better results you will get. You will have a fine foundation stock for the next year, and more care exercised as to what birds are kept for breeders is going to put the flocks where there will be vigor enough in them to hatch enough of the eggs set, and to raise enough of the hatched chicks to yield a reasonable profit. The subject is too large to more than touch on it in a general way, but I want every reader to do better with his poultry in 1915 than the year past. Make your poultry raising worth while.

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Lb.

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