

Practical Poultry Suggestions

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THERE are a great many things on every poultry plant that one can vastly improve by thoroughly investigating the conditions, and making one's experience bring forth better methods.

Naturally, this applies more to those who have been engaged in the poultry business for some time, but in the case of the beginner, he should look as closely as possible to the more experienced for suggestions, and thus avoid errors that have been made by others. To get into a rut and stay there, contented with things as they are, just because there is some mental or physical work attached to improving matters, will spell ruin in the long run.

Study your own methods and conditions, and then compare them with the methods and conditions on your neighbors' plants. Where you can see that they have something or some way of doing things that seems better than your own, adopt the change, working gradually into the new regime. It may be that it will not work so well when applied to your own plant. If you find this to be so, don't continue, just because the other fellow finds it satisfactory—get a better arrangement, for your plant—that's what brains are given us for!

Experience Safe Guide.

Experience, however, should be a guide that can safely be followed, provided one has the ability to choose between the sound, solid result of practical methods, and the high-sounding, flashy claims made by one who can dream better than he can act. Take your cue largely from the poultrymen who have been in the business for years—not months. Usually, such persons have worked out the various problems of the business in a systematic way, and in most instances, their results can be relied upon.

There are many little things on every poultry plant that one can change so as to make matters better. To improve the fertility of the hatching eggs means that larger hatches can be gotten from the same number of eggs set in an incubator.

If the fertility can be brought from 75 per cent to 90, there are 15 more possible chicks in every 100 eggs set. Not only this, but the fact that the fertility runs so high, means also that the entire number of fertile eggs are of so much better hatching quality that the net hatching results of all the eggs will likely be materially increased.

Eliminating Infertility.

If a personal reference may be pardoned, the writer may say that a couple of years ago the matter of fertility was brought forward, and the writer decided to try to eliminate the loss of so many infertile eggs, and at the same time to increase the hatchability of all the eggs set.

After giving the matter much careful deliberation and thought, two or three methods were decided upon, and experiments begun. Some of the methods did little to change results. One or two ways stood out quite satisfactorily. The first was to improve the condition and health—stamina and vigor—of the breeders. The other way was the method of feeding.

To change matters in the first method took more than a single season. That Fall, practically all the yearling and 2-year-old hens were kept over the Winter, and also some cock birds. Naturally, these old hens did not lay as well as pullets, and the expense of keeping them, therefore, was greater. But one should be particularly careful in the poultry business not to look only at the results of the moment, but to plan ahead, and see the future.

These old hens were not fed to produce many eggs during the Winter—they were fed to put on good solid flesh (care being used that they did not become overfat), and to build up their constitutions. The same with the male birds. The result was that when Spring opened up, these birds were not all tired out from heavy Winter egg production, but were full of vigor and strength.

Breeding Selection.

When the breeding season arrived, the yearling cock birds were mated with only about 10 of the 2-year-old hens, and the yearling hens were mated with cockerels that had been hatched early—in the latter part of February—and were well matured. These cockerels had never been with any hens at any time previous. The number of hens given to each cockerel did not run over 12.

What was the result? An increase

of between 10 and 12 per cent in the fertility! On every hatch of 1000 eggs set, this meant 100 less infertile eggs—an important item of less loss, thus helping somewhat in making up for the expense of keeping the old birds through the Winter.

Not only was the fertility greatly improved, but the percentage of the hatches was also greatly increased. And, moreover, the chicks that did hatch would "pop out" just like popping corn, and they were very active, and showed their vitality in their actions.

Easy to Raise.

Was it hard to raise these chicks? Most decidedly not. They simply couldn't be kept from growing. Their appetites never seemed really appeased, and they were "on the go," racing around their pens, from morning till night. The loss of chicks for the first three weeks dropped to a little over 3 per cent.

The following year, the same method was followed. Results the next breeding season were even better than anticipated. The fertility of eggs set ran higher than the year before, and especially early in the season, when it is usually hard to get good, fertile eggs. The loss of chicks also dropped again. Suffice it to say that this method has been proven so satisfactory that it is being followed at present.

Last season, the writer thought that in getting better than 90 per cent fertility from eggs laid in January and early February and set before February 15, he was doing remarkably well. But over 1000 eggs that were set on February 5, 1914, (that were laid in the latter part of January and up to the date set), tested 91 1-3 per cent fertile!

Such exceptional results are the outcome of careful study of conditions, and the use of birds that have been bred, as were their parents before them, for vigor and vitality. They are not impossibilities, and you can do the same, if you will give the matter the time and attention it justly deserves. Such victories are not to be gained by wishing!

Do Not Force Hen.

The matter of change in the method of feeding the breeders is too extensive to be taken up in this article, but suffice it to say that variety, of both quantity and the ingredients of the food given the birds, is one of the principal parts of the method. Green food in abundance must be furnished. Remember also this one important point: You cannot force a hen throughout the Winter for high egg production, and get fertile, hatchable eggs the following season.

In the matter of the hatchability of the eggs, it may be said, as has been mentioned before, that the chicks hatched in large numbers from each sitting. By again studying the method of feeding and rearing the young stock, with strong, livable chicks as the foundation, the loss of chicks dropped to less than 2 per cent! Just as a little example of the careful attention that was given these matters to get all these results, let me say that the writer examined more than a dozen different kinds of commercial chick food before the satisfactory kind was located.

When Van Dyke was asked with what he mixed his paints, to get such remarkable pictures, he replied: "With brains, sir!"

Guarding Against Losses in Poultry

BY MRS. LEON J. HEALY.

IF every egg hatched and every chick matured and developed into a prize winner, what a calamity there would be. No effort, no work, no specializing, no science. But the chicken business is an occupation, a real one and our success depends on the manner in which we have conducted it. It savors of battle from beginning to end. It means a hard fight to win.

After the chick is hatched, the mighty mite is in the coop and runs ready to get busy, and needs to be met with some pure kerosene. The wily head louse is not to be forgotten and an application of head louse ointment, or exterminator, will soon make him surrender.

The coop, with ample accommodations for the old hen and her brood of tiny chicks, does not have the happy faculty of enlarging as do the chicks; the air is foul and the heat too intense during the night and when given their liberty in the cool morning they are apt to chill and the bat-

tle of colds and roup may have to be fought.

Musty, sour food gives a chance for aspergilosis or indigestion. Sorting out the culls, sports and those which are disqualified and sent to market or used on the table is much better than to catch haphazard and cull late in the Fall.

Good screen doors are necessary to provide for ventilation and yet keep out the rats, skunks and minks. After the chicks are matured there is still another varmint that is as measly and wily as a louse or mite and worse than a skunk that gets off with a fraction of the year's work. He uses a sack or other receptacle that is convenient to move full-grown fowls from one house to another. To all outward appearances he resembles a man but in reality he is a varmint of the worst type. A good padlock and well bolted doors will make his visits cease.

These are some of the things we must guard against and that keep us on the firing line, and, when the battle is over and the blue ribbon hangs on our coop or that of our customer it causes us to feel that we are in a business that is really worth while.

Special Feeding; Poultry Fattening for Market

HEN-FATTENING methods are best adapted for use on farms where it is beyond reason to crate-fatten. "Milk-fed" chickens are the most popular on the markets, and are fed for 14 days, but recent results indicate that a more profitable gain may be secured in even shorter time, provided the same price per pound is to be obtained for the finished product. Practically all special feeding demands the use of milk, thus producing the popular "milk-fed" chickens.

On the farm, milk is the least expensive, as the butter-fat has already been separated, and a portion given to the hogs and a sufficient amount reserved for the poultry pen. It is a most essential ration constituent, and when a feeder does not get milk in some form he does not attempt to produce stock for market.

Fresh buttermilk, condensed buttermilk, and skim-milk are preferred in their relative order. The feed is mixed to the consistency of thick cream, or so that it will drip from the tip of a spoon.

Rations of 50 per cent, corn meal and 10 per cent fine shorts, 58 per cent corn meal, 36 per cent oat flour, and 6 per cent tallow, by weight, give very good results, producing gains which cost from 6.45 to 7.74 cents per pound. Low-grade wheat flour is a more economical feed than oat flour at the present prices of grain.—Earl W. Gage, New York.

Judge Show Bird by Laying Ability, Says College Man

JUDGE a hen by the meat and egg standard as well as by her size, shape and color.

This was the keynote of an address by J. G. Halpin, of the College of Agriculture, University of Wisconsin, before the annual meeting of the American Poultry Association held at Chicago. Mr. Halpin's remarks were aimed chiefly at the poultry fanciers who have failed to give sufficient attention to egg production and have put undue emphasis on exterior "points."

"I am positive that many of the top-notchers in the business are on the wrong track in this matter," said Mr. Halpin. "I have heard some of the leading fanciers state that they did not care for Winter eggs, but if they are going to ignore egg production, they cannot furnish the type of fowl demanded by the great majority of their customers—the farmers. The farmer wants results both in eggs and meat, no matter how well the stock may score, and no poultry breeder should be satisfied until his birds give satisfaction in the hands of less expert men."

At the Vatican.

Where the Italian skies
Arch with their azure span,
Silent of lip he lies
There in the Vatican.
What of his high estate?
That does not make him great!
Prelates and popes and kings,
They are but petty things
Unless in the mortal urn
The fires immortal burn;
Sympathy, charity, faith,
The simpler, larger trust;
Love that mounts like a wraith
Over the grosser dust!
Place and pomp and power,
They are if little worth;
Creeds abide for an hour;
Deeds, they sweeten the earth;
Not for the robes he wore,
Not for his churchly ties,
But that his fair life bore,
All that is good in man,
Do we honor him who lies
There in the Vatican.
—Clinton Scollard, in New York Sun.

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