

Raising of Geese on the Farm

A FEW generations ago breeding and raising geese was one of the most common branches of poultry culture in this country. The feathers were used to make pillows and feather-beds.

At the present time the raising of geese is not so extensively engaged in as that of ducks. While the geese cannot be raised in as large numbers as ducks, they can be handled with profit. On many farms there are places that are worthless for cultivation that could be utilized with excellent results in rearing geese. Many farmers are profiting by this and adding considerably to their incomes each year. And many more might do likewise.

The care and attention necessary are small items when compared with the returns. The cost of food is also proportionately small in comparison with that of other birds bred and reared for market.

Adult geese having range will gather the greater portion of their food, consisting very largely of grasses, insects, and other matter from the fields and brooks. During this time the cost of keeping them is simply the value of the grass they consume. However, during the breeding and laying season, they should be fed in addition to the grass, a ration twice a day, consisting of shorts and Indian meal, equal parts, thoroughly moistened with cold water, but not too wet lest it produce diarrhea. The mass should be dry enough to crumble. Do not feed more than they will eat up clean each time.

A Grazing Fowl.

The goose is naturally a grazing fowl. The bill is provided with sharp, interlocking, serrated edges, designed to easily cut and divide vegetable tissues, and the tongue at the tip is covered with hard, hair-like projections, pointing toward the throat, which serve to quickly and surely convey the bits of grass and leaves into the throat. Geese should have a liberal supply of crushed oyster shell, grit and charcoal. Also all the pure water they will drink.

When mating, for best results the number of geese with one gander should never be more than three, and usually it is better if there be only two. Geese have a strong attachment to their home, and removal at the breeding season usually has an injurious effect up on the egg yield and the fertility of the eggs. When once mated they are very much attached to each other and seldom prove unfaithful. Therefore, mismating and remating are often unsuccessful unless old mates are separated beyond sight and hearing of each other. The females are reliable and productive breeders for many years, but the ganders often become unreliable after seven to nine years. When they should be replaced with young ones. Much care should be taken in the selection of the breeders. If possible have them two years old (especially the geese), large and vigorous.

Necessary Nests.

Early in February make large, warm nests—barrels placed on the sides, with clean straw, are good—if they are comfortable in their quarters and are not disturbed, they will lay in the same nest every year. Do not neglect to gather the eggs early in the morning as they are easily chilled, the goose covers the eggs with the nesting material on leaving the nest but when it is cold weather this will not be sufficient protection from the cold.

When the goose becomes broody after the first laying, keep her away from the nest for a few days, and she will begin laying again. Incubate their first laying with chicken hens, giving them four to six eggs, according to the size of the hen. Have your sitting hens free from lice. Treat them with a good insect powder every week. Sprinkle the eggs with warm water twice during the last week they are hatching, and oftener in dry, hot weather will do no harm. Twenty-eight to 30 days' incubation is required for hatching.

Grass is the most important of all foods for young goslings, therefore, it is best not to have the goslings hatched before there is a good supply of grass, as they devour quite an amount of it.

Feeding Young Goslings.

The first problem with young goslings is, what is best to feed them to produce fine, large, healthy birds. True, there are about as many bills of fare as there are poultry raisers. It is best that no feed be given until they are 24 hours old, then they may be given a light feed of rolled oats, dry, some water to drink and care should be used they do not get damp

or tread in the water. Here the use prove very satisfactory. Prepare a food by using one-third cornmeal and two-thirds bran, dampened (not wet), mixed and baked. It is not necessary to bake it very long, just so that it is thoroughly heated. If it is prepared properly it is very crumbly when done. After it is cool add one tablespoonful of bone meal to every gallon of the food. It is best to prepare the food fresh every day. Feed this food alternately with rolled oats for nearly one week, after which the oats can be abandoned, and the prepared food used only. Soda, a very little salt, and good grit added to the food every few days prevent indigestion and bowel trouble. Bran is quite indispensable as a bone forming element, and grit should be provided at all times. Feed often while they are young—four times a day until they are three weeks old, and three times thereafter will be sufficient. As soon as they can eat cracked corn and wheat, the prepared feed may be fed in the morning only. Keep plenty of fresh water at their disposal.

Be sure to have plenty of shade, as they suffer greatly from heat. Do not give them crowded quarters, the more range the better. They should be protected from extreme heat of sun, from showers or storms. They should have dry bedding at night and should not be crowded or huddled together. Like other poultry they need plenty of room.

Things Not to Do.

Don't expect the hen to lay well and molt at the same time.

Don't let the drinking troughs get dirty.

Don't feed second quality grain and expect first quality results.

Don't let the lice get the better of you for want of a few minutes' work a week.

Don't let the houses go more than a week without cleaning.

Don't let the hens go through the molt without all the green feed they can eat.

Don't let every dope fakir that comes along get a few dollars from you for some nostrum that is claimed to give you a veritable gold mine in the egg yield. Why isn't that man in the poultry business himself?

Don't see your hens going light and blame it onto luck. There is something wrong that you can probably remedy.

Don't wonder that your neighbor is having better success than you are. See if his houses aren't built better than yours.

Detecting the Layer.

There are many so-called systems of detecting heavy layers by certain parts of bony structures, but they are in no sense true, for they claim that certain things are fixed and permanent in any individual, whereas these are more or less modified by immaturity, changes to maturity, etc., and no system other than the trap nest ever could or ever will tell just how many eggs a hen will lay in 305 days or longer. Some systems can tell the fowl that is laying—but the number of eggs laid by the hen is mere guesswork.—Chicago Herald.

Training for Show.

The secret of having birds tame and in condition that they will pose in the show coop is to train them for a few weeks before showing. Place them in a coop similar to the exhibition coop and handle them often. Feed them in these coops and hold choice bits of food, such as meat, near the top of the coop, so that they are compelled to reach for it. This will get them in the habit of coming to the front of the coop and standing erect when anyone approaches it.—Memphis Commercial Appeal.

GETTING THE BREEDERS IN CONDITION.

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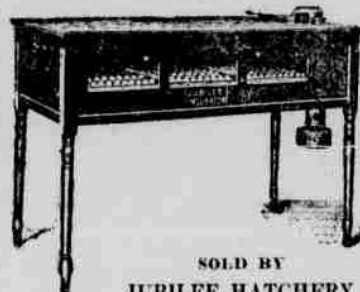
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