

Raising Poultry in America---Making It a Profitable Business

Errors in planning, constructing and locating the buildings are responsible for much loss of time and efficiency on the poultry plant. Such losses may easily be avoided by any one, even the most inexperienced, who will take the trouble to consider the matter and make use of the ripe experience of others.

The following article presents the general principles of poultry-house construction and location, as generally accepted by the most successful poultry keepers.

BY PROF. FREDERIC H. STONEBURN.

BEFORE the interested beginner in poultry-keeping can actually make a start, he must provide quarters for his fowls. The baby chicks may get along comfortably for a time in the makeshift quarters afforded by a paper-covered packing box, but as they grow and reach maturity they demand more ambitious structures. And, to a very considerable degree, the returns from the flock are determined by the character of the buildings in which it is housed. This does not indicate that poultry buildings must necessarily be costly, because in this case efficiency is not measured by price. Simple, inexpensive structures may have all the essential features of the ideal building and give continuously satisfactory service for a long term of years.

Obviously, the best time to erect poultry houses is during the Summer months when the weather is right and the days long. One should take plenty of time to carefully consider all the factors which have a bearing upon his particular problem, then select that tested type of house which best meets his needs.

Adopt Tested Types of Houses.

Let us emphasize that word tested. The enthusiastic amateur is too often inclined to experiment, to incorporate in his poultry buildings features which he is pleased to term "original," but which are usually either valueless or worse. For untold generations poultrymen have been experimenting in poultry house construction and the popular structures of today represent the best things which have been evolved. It would be vain to predict that the future will not bring forth improved plans, but it is pretty sound advice to tell the beginner that he had best stick to structures of known value and attempt to work out new and original ideas after he has learned more about the needs of his birds.

In future articles we will give working plans and descriptions of a number of poultry buildings which are widely used and generally satisfactory. This contribution will deal exclusively with the general principles of the construction and location of houses for the adult flock.

A very large proportion of the beginners and side-line poultry keepers, may find it easier and more economical to buy their houses ready made rather than to build them. This is especially true of those who are so busy that they cannot do the work themselves and must, therefore, hire carpenters. Also, those who are located in certain sections where building materials are very high in price.

There are a number of well-known concerns which specialize in the manufacture of portable poultry houses, buying the materials in large quantities, doing much of the work by machinery, and shipping the structures in sections—"knocked down"—thus securing the benefit of minimum freight rates. In view of the many savings thus effected these builders can frequently deliver satisfactory houses of good design, complete with all needed furnishings, at a figure well below the cost of similar buildings erected at home.

When received, these portable houses may be easily and quickly set up, it merely being necessary to adjust a few bolts or screws.

The portable house is especially valuable to those who live on rented property. If it is ever necessary to change to a new location the houses may be taken down and sent by wagon or freight to the new place. Many who erect their own buildings are making them in easily-moved sections for this very good reason.

Production Depends Upon Comfort.

It is important that the poultryman should always keep this fact in mind: Growth and egg production are, in very large degree, determined by the comfort of the stock.

Aim to keep your birds continuously comfortable. Make them happy and contented. Maximum returns can never be secured under any other conditions.

The location of the poultry house has much to do with the comfort of the flock kept therein. The soil, the exposure, the protection afforded by hills, woods, buildings and other windbreaks, even the matter of atmospheric drainage, all have their bearing upon the question.

In many cases the poultryman has but one available location for his poultry house. Under such conditions he should do everything possible to overcome the unfavorable factors. But where a considerable area of land is at hand, it is always wisdom to select that spot which

has the largest number of natural advantages.

The ideal soil is one which is open in character, warm and well drained. Heavy clay, even when improved by tile-drainage, is inclined to be wet and cold, with dirty, sticky surface, unpleasant to work on and difficult to keep in sanitary condition.

Clear sand, at the other extreme, has a clean surface, is usually dry, and is automatically purified by every rain. On the other hand, sand is hot in the warm season and it is difficult to maintain on it a good stand of growing green stuff.

Sandy Loam Soil Best.

The most satisfactory soil is the happy medium between these extremes; a rather light, sandy loam, well drained and warm, capable of producing good crops of grass or other vegetation. Poultrymen are succeeding on heavy clay and clear sand, and others can do likewise, but they must take the necessary measures to overcome the attendant drawbacks.

The house should be set in a sheltered spot. A bleak hilltop is exposed to the sweep of the winds from every direction, and while a free movement of air is appreciated by the fowls during the Summer months, it is not desirable during a large part of the year.

Sometimes a valley, which at first sight might seem splendidly sheltered, is so formed that it constitutes a funnel through which the winds sweep. This is quite as uncomfortable as the hilltop.

Where possible, place the building below the crest of a hill, behind woodland or thick hedges, within the shelter of large barns or other structures. If these are not available and the site is an exposed one, high board fences may be erected and these will be of great help in overcoming the effect of sweeping winds.

One of the best possible locations is a gentle hillside inclining toward the south. Steep hillsides are entirely satisfactory to the birds, but the attendant cannot perform his daily work as easily as on a moderate slope.

In such sheltered places the fowls receive full benefit of the Winter sunshine and are able to comfortably get out on the ground for days at a time when less favored flocks are of necessity confined to the house.

Of course, these remarks apply particularly to those sections of the country where the Winters are trying. In the south such considerations have less weight.

Never locate the house in depressions or hollows where the dampness settles. Air drainage is equally as important as soil drainage. Mists and fogs settle in the low places, enveloping everything in a damp blanket, and fowls which are constantly exposed to such conditions are in constant danger of contracting colds, roup and other diseases.

Face the house to the south or slightly east or west of south if the lay of the

land demands. This permits the doors, windows and other openings to be so arranged that a maximum amount of sunshine is admitted and chilling winds kept out.

The above factors have a great bearing upon maintaining comfortable conditions during the months of unfavorable weather. But one must not overlook the fact that the birds may suffer as keenly from too high temperature as from the cold. And as August eggs are usually worth as much as those produced in February, it pays to keep the stock comfortable and productive during the heat of midsummer. This is best accomplished by providing for ample ventilation of the buildings and supplying an abundance of shade in the yards. The latter may be natural or artificial, but it must be provided.

Just so far as conditions permit, the site of the building should be convenient for the caretaker. If the flock is right at hand it will usually receive better care than when quartered at a considerable distance from the dwelling. And care means eggs!

Essentials of Poultry House.

The essential features of the house itself may be stated in a very few words. But the designing of a building embodying all the desirable features is not such a simple matter.

Remembering that the house is a home for his hens, the poultryman will first strive to provide exactly the conditions which are most conducive to the health, happiness and welfare of his flock.

First, the building should be dry. Our land fowls can withstand heat and cold much better than dampness. Dampness is usually due to the use of an improper floor, a poor roof or insufficient ventilation.

Free ventilation is demanded that the stock may have an abundance of fresh air and not be compelled to live in a vitiated, musty, damp atmosphere. This is best secured through the use of openings of goodly size in one side of the building. The modern open-front poultry house is the answer to this particular problem.

The house should be free from draughts or rapidly moving currents of air. These are certainly the source of much discomfort, save during the Summer months, and may be a cause of sickness. Tight construction of roof, ends and back of the building will overcome this trouble.

Plenty of light and sunshine make for the desired comfort and are easily admitted to the building. They are especially needed during the short, cold days; they are welcome the rest of the year. A dark house is usually a dirty one and fowls confined therein will hardly pay a profit.

Make Buildings Large Enough.

The building should be large enough to give the birds plenty of room. Overcrowding means lowered production. The

amount of floor space allowed each bird varies according to circumstances. In large structures, accommodating 50 or more head, four to five square feet is sufficient. In small buildings, particularly where the flock must be kept confined for days at a time, more space is needed. The size of the fowls themselves also has a bearing upon the matter. A building of given size will accommodate a larger number of Leghorns than of Brahmas.

Dryness, ventilation, freedom from draughts, light, sunshine and room are what the birds require. These may be found in a structure of almost any size or constructed of almost any material. It is merely a matter of planning.

The poultryman will see to it that his buildings are convenient to work in, with interior fittings so arranged as to permit him to do his work well in the shortest space of time. Time is a big factor in poultry-keeping and none should be wasted.

As a matter of business he will seek economy of construction, erecting at lowest possible cost buildings which meet the above requirements.

In many cases it is possible to make use of existing structures, as woodsheds, barns, old-type poultry houses, and at little expense convert them into really satisfactory quarters for the poultry flock. When one really knows what is needed it is not usually a difficult problem to meet the various requirements.

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Chicken Lice and Mites.

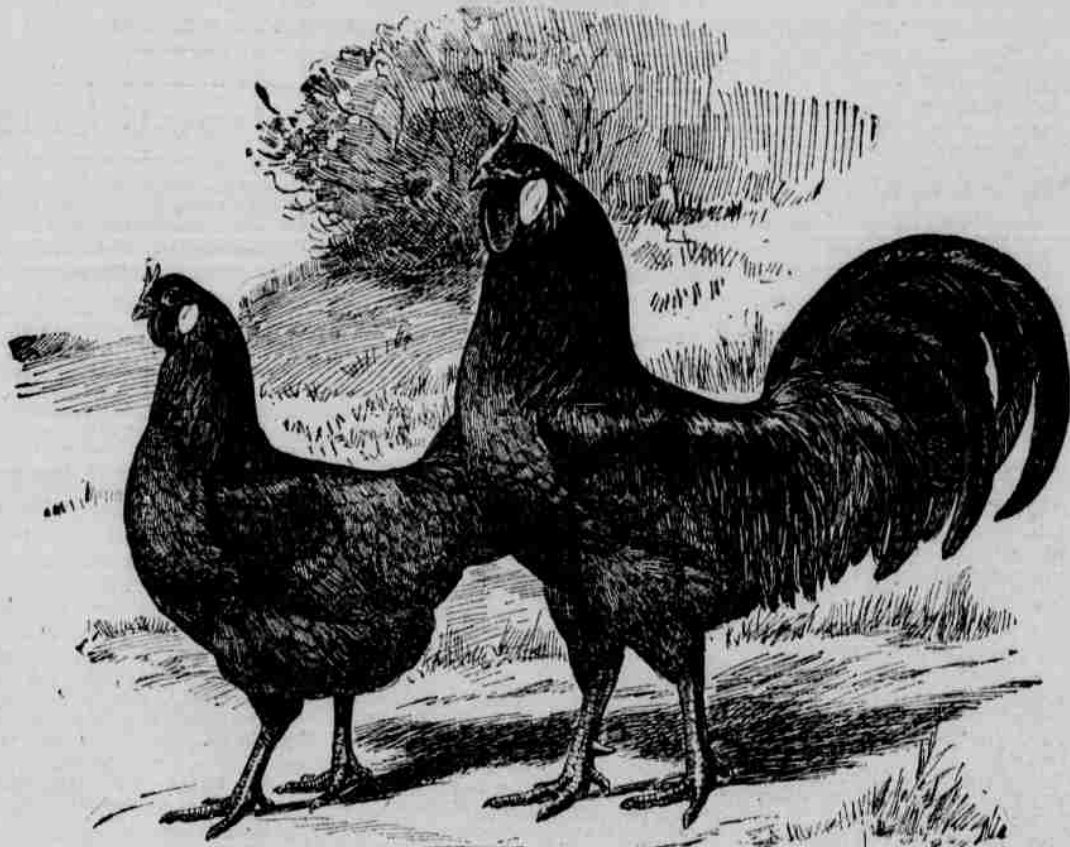
Clear the chicken-houses of poultry pests by clearing out all refuse and spray the sheds inside and the roosts with crude carbolic emulsion made as follows:

Dissolve in one gallon of boiling water a half-pound of whale oil soap. To this add two gallons of crude carbolic or creosote and stir rapidly until a thorough emulsion is made. Apply without dilution. Following this apply a thorough coat of whitewash, filling up all the cracks and crevices which may afford hiding places for mites.

In case of lice on poultry apply directly to the chickens themselves a mixture of plaster of Paris and carbolic acid. This mixture is made as follows: Crude carbolic acid, one-half pint; gasoline, one and one-half pints, and plaster of Paris, five pounds. Work together to form a moist powder and rub well into the feathers. These are formulae recommended by the O. A. C. Department of Entomology.

As to the milk pail, we have it with us always. Never use a wooden bucket for holding milk. And remember the best tin ones are made without a seam, and the small-topped ones enable us to get cleaner milk than we did by the old method.

LA FLECHE FOWLS.



The La Fleche fowl is extremely popular among the French producers of table poultry of the finest grade, and these poultrymen have to be superior in the art of growing and finishing of table stock. In fact, the market poultry of France, the capons and poulardes, sold on the Paris market is frequently referred to by travelers as being superior to anything of the kind found elsewhere in the world.

If the above is true one naturally wonders why the breed has not been widely adopted in America. Apparently, the explanation lies in two facts: Our markets generally demand table stock having yellow skin and shanks, and our producers of table poultry are not as particular in such important matters as selection of superior breeds, growing and finishing the stock as are the utility poultrymen of some other countries. Males weigh 8½ and 7½ pounds; females, 7½ and 6½ pounds. The hens are fair producers of white-shelled eggs of large size. The plumage color is rich, glossy black. One peculiar feature is the V-shaped comb, which is clearly shown in the cut.