

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.

MOST BEGINNERS in poultry making their first mistake in the purchasing of eggs for hatching, day-old chicks, or breeding birds from stock that is not of the highest merit. Many order their foundation stock for future poultry operations from the list of poultry growers who sell the cheapest.

To the beginner who can not afford to pay for the best this must naturally be resorted to, but there are many who, in starting out can afford to pay for good stock. Some have the idea that, as the first year will be an experiment, the cheap stock will do, but in this they fool themselves, as under fair care the results from the purchase is not satisfactory, and the breed is blamed without giving any thought to the difference in the strains of good and poor breeders.

It has been the experience of every beginner who has started with stock from the haphazard breeder that, sooner or later, they go to headquarters and pay the price for the real thing, and this good start might just as well be made in the beginning as after one has lost several years and some money in attempting to get a flock of fowls that were profitable.

Every good grower either in the fancy or so-called utility knows the value of his stock and the price asked for hatching eggs, day-old chicks or stock is above the highest quotation of market poultry or eggs. As a rule the more merit the breeder's stock has attained, the higher the price asked for his goods, and yet the average good breeder receives many letters from beginners, asking for eggs, chicks or stock at but little above market prices.

It is true the world over, and poultry is no exception, that one generally gets what he pays for, and it is out of the question for the beginner to expect high-grade eggs, chicks or stock at prices that are low. It is true that often during the late spring a reduction is made from the regular price. The early orders have been filled on eggs and a reduction from the full lay of the breeding pens can be made.

In the case of chicks, fertility is now high, and the incubators are hatching their best. In the case of stock at times a sacrifice must be made to make room for the growing chicks, which in the breeder's opinion will prove as good as or better than the parent stock.

In these circumstances one can at times receive from good breeders a start with good stock at prices under the regular figure, but only under those conditions may poultry or eggs for the foundation of one's flock be considered. Then, if possible, one should know something of the breeder and the reputation the stock has made. Prices are based on the reputation of the breeder's skill in producing fowls

that either win at the poultry exhibits or are heavy layers; or a combination of both.

It is not alone the large breeder who possesses these fowls, but the smaller breeder as well. It may be a back-lotter with a small flock, or it may be the owner of a large plant, but the breeder must have the goods, and the kind that makes good in the hands of his customers, provided they have managed the fowls in a proper manner.

FATTENING POULTRY.

POULTRY fatten much more rapidly and with less feed when confined to a small area than when running at large. It is little use to try to fatten a bird that has not attained its growth or very nearly. It will grow but not fatten.

About three weeks before wanted for market, confine the birds to be fattened in a small, rather dark place, either coop or pen. See that they are free from lice and keep their quarters comfortably clean. Supply them with plenty of grit and with charcoal to keep their digestion good. Feed a mash of corn meal and beef scraps, all they will eat, but do not leave it by them as it is likely to sour and cause indigestion. Give them whole corn also, to break the monotony occasionally, and a small feed of raw meat or green bone twice a week to keep them vigorous and the appetite from getting clayed. They should have plenty of fresh water at all times.

In three weeks they should be very fat and should have made a gain in weight that will pay for all food eaten during the time. An excellent fattening coop is made of a box with slatted front and bottom nailed to the side of a building either indoor or out. In warm weather it is preferable out of doors; in cold weather inside. The slatted bottom allows the droppings to fall through and the coop is thus kept clean. Feed and water receptacles can be nailed to the ends. The most usual way is to use a pen in the hen-house, a box stall, or something of this nature, and keep it well covered with litter, placing feed and water in troughs. The amount of labor and expense necessary to properly fatten market poultry is small and when one sees the quantities of scrawny pin-feathered birds in the markets it proves conclusively that there is plenty of room at the top. A fat, mature bird will not be pin-feathered.

FOWLS AND FEATHERS.

THE FEATHER contains the bodily secretion of the fowl, which is of a salty nature. Blood secretions which adhere to the stub of the feather when freshly pulled supplies a natural craving of the bird for salt and causes feather plucking. It is known that the birds get excited at the sight of blood among a flock of fowls; all anxious and greedy for the food thrown before them, they all go to pecking and striking at one another, causing the blood to flow. If birds are fed with salt in a suitable proportion in their mash, no feather-pulling will occur among the birds.

Scratchings

SANITATION is the first essential in the prevention and cure of diseases. Sanitation means cleanliness; therefore, "clean up," if the chickens are not doing well.

Don't jerk the "broodies" off the nest. How would you enjoy being jerked about abruptly?

Lice take the life right out of fowls, old and young. Not a minute's comfort for the lousy birds.

Poor chickens! They are dependent upon us for so many comforts that come into their lives.

Charcoal should be kept in every poultry yard, as it is a corrective and is relished by the fowls.

Coarse food promotes digestion and helps to keep the fowls in a healthy condition. Feed as much of it as possible.

Do not simply throw the water out of the drinking vessels, and put in fresh water, but wash the vessels thoroughly every time you change the water.

Are you giving your poultry the attention you are giving the other stock, or just allowing it to shift for itself? The smaller the poultry quarters, the cleaner they must be kept.

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