

# Season Now Here For Culling Flocks

## Expert Suggests Inventory; Careful Consideration is Vital

By ROY S. DEARSTYNE

(Head of the Poultry Department at N. C. State College)

The present spring prices for eggs and the continued relatively high cost of poultry feeds has presented a culling problem to the poultryman which requires more careful consideration of factors involved than in past years.

Egg prices held up to a much higher level than in past years in this section and it is very probable that some poultrymen are going to slight the culling which should be done to maintain the flock production at its highest percent for the season of the year.

While peak production has been secured in most instances during the months of March and April, a certain percent of the birds in all flocks of heavy layers will soon begin to break in production, and where this break starts, the individual decline in production usually is very rapid. Consequently, identification and marking of such birds should be done at the earliest possible time.

### What to Cull

Birds breaking in production during May and June are not usually good prospects to carry over for the next lay-



FEEDING THE CHICKS—With the approach of spring this will be a familiar scene throughout the South.

ing year. The following molt or rest period is not usually very rapid and unless the birds were exceptionally early hatched, a break in production is an indication that the bird has not been an exceptionally heavy producer.

On going out of production a bird usually shows a loss of color in the comb which quickly becomes dry and shriveled. The vent loses its loose, moist appearance and the pelvic bones contract. The abdomen gradually becomes hard, rather than showing the soft pliable condition of the abdomen of the bird in heavy production. Such birds are usually easy to identify and should be caught up and carefully examined prior to culling.

Broody birds at this season of the year are likewise poor prospects from a commercial standpoint. Usually one spell of broodiness is followed by another, which fact from an egg producing standpoint, makes broody birds uneconomical.

### Watch Body Weight

During heavy production there is a heavy demand on the body reserve of laying birds. The careful poultryman compensates for this by carefully adjusting his feeding of scratch grain to meet the situation. If this is not done, there arises the probability of a flock collapse from the standpoint of egg production, with the possibility of a high mortality among the layers. The poultryman should make a careful check on body weight at all times, but especially at this season of the year.

In view of the fact that the breeding season is over, there is no place in the laying flock for males. By removing these, infertile eggs may be produced and these have a much higher keeping quality than fertile eggs, thus being of greater value from a marketing standpoint.

Where mass mating has been practiced and no trapnetting done, it is difficult to evaluate the breeding worth of a male. Consequently, culling of males under such conditions is a matter of type and handling qualities. The devalitized male seldom can be carried through the summer and prove a profitable breeder during the next breeding season. Such birds should be culled.

### Take Inventory Now

Looking toward the future, the poultryman should at this time take inventory of his breeding program for next year. If new blood has been introduced two years ago and the performance of the last year pullets has been satisfactory it is possible that next year's breeding may be safely carried out with the cockerels of this year's hatch. However, the introduction of new blood would prove a safer method.

If new blood is to be introduced, the cockerels of this year's hatch should be sold at broiler size as a greater return should be realized than if these birds were carried to a later date. Careful investigation should be made as to the breeding and performance of the flock from which new blood is introduced.

It is probable an economy would be effected if breeding cockerels were purchased at two pounds weight and developed on the premises. In this case about three times the number of males needed should be purchased. This will allow for culling and for mortality.

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