

THE POULTRY YARD

Advice to Beginners in the Poultry Business.

Opportunities for making a success of poultry raising in the South were never better. We need more men who will grow poultry—not the scrub stock that we now see adorning the barnyards of so many Southern homes, but thoroughbred and better poultry that will demand the best prices, and will always find a ready market. We are buying millions of dollars worth of poultry products from our Northern brothers each year and having them shipped to us at fancy prices. Why not just reverse this? Let's grow all of the poultry that we need to consume and have some to ship out. We have an excellent opportunity for doing this; we have the soil, the climate, the feed, or we can grow it, the means, and the brains so why not use them.

In the growing of poultry as in any other business there are many drawbacks and it is principally of these obstacles and how to overcome them that we wish to speak in this article. To start right in the poultry business spells success in most instances. To start with poor methods a breed not suited to purpose; appliances and houses that do not meet the requirements even though they be expensive, will usually result in failure. A great amount of time, money and opportunity is lost every year in making mistakes and afterwards trying to rectify them, which means more loss of time and money. So let the beginner above everything else endeavor to start right.

In all of the operations of the farm there is much carelessness, but we believe that in no department is there so much carelessness and inattention as in the growing of poultry. This business is built of little duties and attentions to the daily need of the stock. Carelessness and inattention to these details and duties will work out failure.

When only a few chicks are to be grown and the range is spacious, the need of care will be lessened, and this number will somehow look out for themselves, but where the number of chickens goes into the hundreds and the range is limited it needs our constant attention and care to bring the chicks to proper maturity.

The feeding question is little thought of, but, nevertheless, is very important. Chicks should be fed regularly; the ration should be properly compounded giving all the essential nutrients. A few days of improper feeding will knock off the entire profit that has been made

on the stock during the whole year. Nothing should be trusted to luck, we should know exactly what the birds demand, and supply it in a way that they may get the most out of it. They should be given constantly grit, water, scraps, a succulent food, dust baths and other essentials for the comfort of the young stock.

Many breeders take care to bring up a good flock of birds and then leave them to the mercy of invading rodents and other vermin. We should go through every house at night, see that every bird is all right and comfortably situated; all doors and windows which have not been screened should be closed, but let the buildings be well ventilated.

Do not trust to the wire fence around the house; many of the intruders will dig under or gain entrance by different methods, so do everything in your power for prevention.

Another cause for much loss is the unbusiness-like methods applied. An account of all expenditures and incomes should be carefully kept. The breeder should know at all times just what his assets and liabilities are, and how much gain or loss. By knowing this he can plan to prevent this loss, or he finds out how to make the business pay him most. It may sound unreasonable, but there are many poultrymen who claim to be successful, who could not, if you should ask them, tell you what their feed cost them last month or last year; they could not tell you how much they made last year—in fact, they know very little about the financial side of their business. Such a state of affairs should not exist—the poultryman should know as much about his business as the banker, merchant or manufacturer.

Many failures are due directly to the lack of foresight and preparation. No man should make the mistake of growing more birds than he has ample room for, and yet this mistake is a common cause of failure. It is any easy matter to take care of 500 or 600 small chicks on a few small lots, but as they grow to maturity these quarters will become entirely too small, filth will begin to accumulate, a few days or weeks of rainy weather will follow, and disease will soon come causing loss, and discouragement is usually next on the program. To avoid all this the breeder must have enough foresight to make the proper plans, and prepare enough roof, or about ten times as much when the fowls are grown as when they are a few weeks old.

Another great mistake is made in not keeping constantly in touch with the current market prices for market poultry. By a careful study of market conditions, the poultryman can plan to have his stock ready for the market when the prices are highest, or he may find out that there are other markets he can get besides the one near him. Many times where prices advance, the grower holds his stock, thinking it will go still higher, and while he is waiting the "bottom drops out of the market" and he loses heavily.

In the construction of new houses, pens, etc., the same lack of forethought is often shown. In building your houses, take time, study, plan, investigate and find out what sort of house will give best results. Count the cost before you build, and build a house that can be run in the easiest possible way and save time and labor for the attendant. Consider well its location, both for summer and winter. The chicks need plenty of shade during the summer, but they must have much sunshine during the winter to get best results.

In feeding, much is often lost because we try to economize in the quantity and quality of food used to rear our poultry, as it is not a matter of how long it will take to feed out a bag or two of feed, but how quickly we can make them eat and digest it, for the quicker the right sort of food gets into the digestive system the quicker it will come out as growth upon the bird, and the quicker it can be exchanged for cash. We should never buy damaged grain or food for poultry because it may be a few cents cheaper. It is false economy. The real economy in the feeding of poultry so as to obtain the best results in the shortest possible time for market poultry and for the production of eggs, is to buy the best grade of every thing and then to blend it in the right proportions so as to get out of it all the food value it contains.

Let the grower always take due precautions. It is as important in this business as in any other, and much loss is due to the failure to make the proper plans and allowances. There are so many contingencies that can not be put down to take place at any given time that all we can do is to be ready for them when they come. Some morning it looks like rain, and precautions must be taken to get all the chicks under shelter as soon as the rain begins to fall, if they are to be let out at all that day. Some man might be left, ready to look after them immediately. More chickens are lost annually throughout this country on account of the neglect of taking the proper precaution against emergencies of all

kinds than from any other source.

We have attempted to point out a few of the avenues of loss to the man who begins to raise poultry. These are a few, but there are many more which it will be well worth while to study carefully. In conclusion, let me say, if you wish to succeed in growing poultry, you must be in love with the work, give it close and careful attention, use the breeds best suited to your conditions and your tastes, and use good business judgment in all of your operations.—W. M. Brown, Dixon, Tenn., in *Industrious Hen*.

Lay in the winter's supply of road dust or sifted coal-ashes, as it will be needed for dust baths.

A load of gravel scattered around houses and coops would greatly contribute to the health of many a flock.

A hen will eat at least a bushel of corn a year if she can get it. Put aside that amount for each one, and see that each one gets her share.

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